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SERMONS

ON

VARIOUS SUBJECTS,

SELECTED FROM THE MANUSCRIPTS OF

THE LATE

REV. E. ROBSON, A.M.

Of Emanuel College, Cambridge;

VICAR OF ORSTON; LECTURER OF ST. MARY, WHITECHAPEL; CHAPLAIN TO THE HONOURABLE THE CORPORATION OF TRINITY HOUSE, AND TO THE WORSHIPFUL THE COMPANY OF VINTNERS;

BY THE

REV. H. C. O'DONNOGHUE, A.M.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

PUBLISHED FOR THE EDITOR,

BY TAYLOR AND HESSEY;

AND SOLD BY MESSRS. BUDD AND CALKIN; RIVINGTONS; LONGMAN & CO.; BURTON AND SMITH; PARKER, OXFORD; DEIGHTON AND SONS, CAMBRIDGE; AND KEENE, DUBLIN.

1818.

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Clay, Printer, Devonshire Street, Bishopsgate.

TO

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS

GEORGE

PRINCE OF WALES,

Regent

OF

THE UNITED KINGDOM

OF

GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

SIR,

IN availing myself of the permission with which your ROYAL HIGHNESS has most condescendingly honoured me, of publishing the Sermons of my Friend and Predecessor, under the sanction of

your exalted Patronage; I will neither insult your ROYAL HIGHNESS, nor degrade myself, by the language of adulation. I must, however, be permitted to record, and most gratefully to acknowledge the munificence and promptitude of attention which my humble application received, unaided as it was by any influence but what the benevolent feelings of your ROYAL HIGHNESS supplied, when contemplating the sorrows and the circumstances of those, whose recent bereavement of him, who was, at once, their Protector, Friend, and Parent, induced my application.

Deeply sensible of the loss they have sustained, the family of the Author indulge the most grateful sentiments towards those whom a kind Providence has influenced to attempt the alleviation of their affliction, not only by contributing to their personal comfort, but by enabling them to perpetuate the remembrance of their Parent among those who revere the character of a distinguished Scholar, and an indefatigable Divine.

The charities of Christian sympathy are not only agreeable to the constitution of our common nature, but prove in their exercise

its brightest ornament, and most invaluable privilege; whilst, originating in Christian feeling, and prompted by Christian motives, they must ever inseparably connect with them the testimony of our own conscience, the approbation of the good, and the abundant blessing of Almighty God.

I have, on this occasion, most sincerely to lament my inability, satisfactorily and adequately to fulfil the wishes and the instructions of those, whom the patronage of your Royal Highness has so graciously honoured and so essentially benefitted. I have,

however, to offer the homage of their gratitude, and the assurance of their devotion to the Person, Family, and Government of your ROYAL HIGHNESS.

That your ROYAL HIGHNESS may long be spared to administer the government, and to experience the affectionate attachment of a loyal and pious people;—and that when you shall have done God's will on earth, you may exchange the perishable splendour even of a British diadem, for the brighter glory of a crown of righteousness in heaven; and leave the unsatisfying vanities of earthly dig-

nity, to participate in the happiness of God's redeemed people; is the fervent wish, and humble prayer, of

Your Royal Highness's
Most faithful
And most devoted
Servant and Subject,
H. C. O'DONNOGHUE.

5, Redman's Row, Mile End,
Oct. 1, 1818.

PREFACE.

In stating that these Volumes are published for the benefit of the Author's Family, I consider myself as assigning a sufficient reason for their publication; and when I add that they were left by the Author, without any such expectation, I feel that I prefer no slight claim for the indulgence of the Reader, should he find occasion for its exercise. In selecting the following Discourses, it has been my aim at once to consult the Author's reputation and the Reader's benefit,—both of which objects I hope to have, in some degree, attained. The Sermons are not, indeed,

the best, either in point of matter or manner, which Mr. Robson could write; for he was an able theologian, and a profound scholar;—but they exhibit a fair specimen of his general pulpit exercises, in which simplicity and plainness of speech are far more necessary than depth of argument, or brilliancy of expression. The one is calculated to please the fancy and dazzle the imagination; the other tends more directly, and more properly, to affect the heart and conscience.

My knowledge of the Author was but of recent date; a similarity of feeling and sentiment on some important subjects, both of theology and civil policy*, which

* I cannot but avail myself of this opportunity most strongly to protest against the sentiments which have been lately disclosed in Mr. Wix's "Reflections;"—sentiments which, though long suspected to be held by some of our High Churchmen, have never been heretofore so fully avowed, nor so publicly maintained. It would appear, that

we were both endeavouring to urge on the attention of the Public, first led to our acquaintance; and notwithstanding our difference of sentiment on some points was as wide, as our union was close on

this Protestant Divine can tolerate Popery, with all its horrid superstition, idolatry, cruelty, and blasphemy, as comparatively innocent;—can even palliate her crimes, vindicate her follies, and justify her errors both of doctrine and practice; nay, can forego the very principles of his own Church, and of the Reformation, whilst he pleads for AN UNION of the Church of England with this Mother of Harlots.—The object of this unnatural alliance is nothing less than to impede the progress of Bible and other Societies, whose plans, operations, and success, are regarded with extreme hostility, ill-will, and dissatisfaction, by certain persons, who, pretending much zeal for the Established Church, regard a departure from her discipline a more serious, and a more lamentable evil, than the widest defection from her principles and doctrine;—thus esteeming the form of religion a matter of more moment than its purity and truth.—I can only for myself say, that deeply as I deplore the rapid increase of dissent, yet, should the Rulers of our Church so far forget their duty to God, and to the nation, as to attempt such a coalition as Mr. Wix recommends, I should deem it my bounden duty to renounce my connection with the Establishment, and to unite with some more Protestant Society;—and I doubt not, but in so doing I

others, yet we ever agreed to differ in Christian charity. Contending most strenuously for the right of private judgment myself, I yield to others the liberty I

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should be following the example of thousands of her best members.

Ought not the Rulers of the Church to inflict some punishment, to express some indignation, or to manifest some displeasure at a publication which is calculated at once to degrade the Establishment, to vilify her principles, and to increase the prejudices of her opponents, as well as weaken the attachment of her friends?

Believing Episcopacy to have prevailed, both in the Apostolic and subsequent ages of the Church, I cannot, however, hear of the Apostolic succession of our Bishops without recalling to recollection, through what a polluted channel it has passed; at the same time, that the fact of there having been, at one period, and for some time, rival Popes, induces me to think the succession not quite so clear, unbroken, and direct as some gentlemen imagine. Indeed, upon Mr. Wix's principles, it might be no difficult matter to prove him, and the Bench of Bishops themselves, unbaptized; and, consequently, all their official acts null and void. Such are the consequences of High Church principles when pushed beyond the bounds of reason and common sense; they endanger the very safety of the Throne; introduce confusion into society, and annul the validity of our Episcopal Ordinations; insomuch that, on these principles, his Grace of Canterbury bears no more

claim; hence I am neither surprised nor angry that there should exist differences of opinion between myself and my friends on minor points; satisfied if we agree in the great doctrines of the Gospel, and are building our hopes of heaven, as miserable sinners, on Jesus Christ, the elect and precious chief corner-stone, whilst we cultivate, as the fruit of faith in him, that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.

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legitimate commission as a minister of religion, than the veriest Methodist preacher.

Of Mr. Wix, and such like champions, with all their "Reflections," "Demonstrations," and "Inquiries," the Church may truly say,

> "Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis
> Tempus eget."

These opinions will, I know, give offence; but, like Mr. Wix, I risque the consequences, animated by the paramount feelings of conscience and duty. The Church has solid ground of her own, upon which her cause may not only be pleaded, but successfully defended. She, therefore, needs not to be incumbered with such useless armour.

On subjects of Ecclesiastical Authority, Discipline, Rites and Ceremonies, I have thought it fair to let the Author's sentiments be known; although I am free to confess, I do not acquiesce in the rigidity of his system. I am most cordially attached to the Established Church myself;—I see daily cause to be thankful and satisfied at the choice I have made: I believe that the Articles, Liturgy, and Homilies of the Church, contain the sum and substance of divine truth as to doctrine and practice; but I cannot conceal from myself, nor ought I to suppress the confession to the world, that there is a party, a powerful—I had almost said a dominant party, within the bosom of the Church, who have strangely and awfully departed from her doctrines; and, by their defection from the doctrines, have obliged and necessitated others most unwillingly

to depart from her Communion. Much, therefore, of the sin and guilt of schism, if such it must be called, lies doubtless on the consciences of our own Clergy, who surely ought not too severely to condemn the conduct and practices which their own negligence, unfaithfulness, and worldly-mindedness have occasioned. Let us rather learn from the Sectaries diligence, zeal, and faithfulness,—ever remembering that the only way to banish heresy and schism, is honestly and simply to preach Jesus Christ and him crucified. More than this the occasion does not seem to require; less I could not say in justice to myself.

The Sermons on the Liturgy, in the second volume, would have occupied a place in the first, had I received them in time; but, having been mislaid, it was for some time apprehended that they were

lost; nor were they discovered till the greater part of the first volume had passed through the press.

I have now nothing to add, but my earnest hope that the sale of these Volumes will realize the wishes and expectations of all concerned; and that their contents may, by God's blessing, promote his glory, and the best interests of man.

H. C. O'D.

SERMONS,

&c. &c.

JOHN xiv. 1.

Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me.

IN these words our Saviour offers himself to the minds of his disciples as an object of faith, equally with God. We cannot allow the meaning of the passage to be explained away;—as if he had said, "Ye believe in God, repose confidence in my veracity and my assurances;" no: the plain literal sense of the text is the true one: "You believe in God, as the maker and preserver of all things; believe in me also, the Word of

God, by whom all things were made, and by whom, together with the Father, all things are preserved.

The tenor of this chapter represents our Lord as comforting his disciples, previously to his departure; and unless we admit that he was God and Man, ("equal to the Father as touching his Godhead, and inferior to the Father as touching his manhood,") the whole will be involved in contradiction and such absurdity, as it is impossible the Holy Spirit could dictate, or the beloved disciple reduce to writing. Jesus speaks of himself, as having the power of allotting places to believers in the mansions of the blessed. "In my Father's house (says he) are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, there ye may be also." He calls God his Father; and thus he claimed, in the opinion of his hearers, a per-

fect equality with God; for the unbelieving Jews (as we read in the tenth of John) impeached him of blasphemy, because he said he was the Son of God; and would have stoned him, because by this sonship he made himself God. But in this fourteenth chapter, he nearly identifies himself with the Deity: "If ye had known *me*, (says he) ye should have known *my Father* also; and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us *the Father*, and it sufficeth us: Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen *me*, *hath seen the Father*; and how sayest thou, then, shew us the Father? believest thou not, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?" And again, when he speaks of their praying in his name, he says not,—*the Father* will do it; but, "Whatsoever

ye shall ask in my name, that will *I* do;" and this assertion of divine power is not to be deemed an undue assumption of heavenly authority, derogatory to the honour of God; for he adds,—"that the Father may be glorified in the Son." "If ye shall ask any thing in my name, *I* will do it."

As in the last passage but one, which I have mentioned, he nearly identifies himself with God the Father, so in the eighteenth verse, he nearly assimulates himself with the Holy Ghost. For after promising the disciples that he would pray the Father, and *he* should give them another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth,"—he adds, "I will not leave you comfortless, *I* will come unto you." St. Paul recognizes this divine Spirit, and makes its in-dwelling in the soul of man the very criterion, that is, *the test*, and the very badge and characteristic of a true disciple of Jesus:—says he,

"If any man have not the Spirit *of Christ*, he is none of his." So then, the Father is to send a Comforter, *another* Comforter, and yet it is JESUS who is to come to his disciples; and he who is the Spirit of *God*, (the Holy Ghost,) is styled also the Spirit of *Christ* by St. Paul.

Thus looking into the Scripture, how the mysteries of religion disclose themselves to our wondering eyes! How the operations of divine wisdom and goodness are discerned! How we learn to distinguish the part taken interchangeably by each person of the Godhead in perfecting the blessed scheme of redemption! Let the unbeliever scoff at the offence of the cross; let the deist swell with the plenitude of self-conceit, which is but the inanity of man's wisdom;—the *Christian* is content to be taught God's religion in God's own way; and is thankful for those disclosures of the

nature of God, and the operations of his providence, in compassing the salvation of man, which the page of Scripture supplies. He will not say, as one did, "I believe because it is impossible;" but this he will say, "I believe, although at first sight it seems impossible."

Now in the texts I have quoted, allow me to point out a distinction between the person of the Holy Spirit and the Son: notwithstanding Christ says, "*I* will come unto you," he says also, "that the Father will send his disciples *another* Comforter." If we have humility enough to fashion our theology by the Word of God, we shall find no difficulty here, because we shall discern a plurality of persons in the Godhead; and therefore what is said of each of them in one sense, is true of all of them in another. But the deist, who disdains the guidance of Scripture, is offended at these doctrines;

he measures Revelation by the standard of his own capacity, and rejects what rises above it,—that is, he refuses to be taught divine things by the Divinity himself.

As I have shewn you the distinction supplied in this chapter between the persons of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, so I must now shew you another between the Son and the Father, which occurs in the twenty-eighth verse. You have seen already how Christ claims equality with God, as the object of faith, as ruling in heaven, as clothed with the power of granting the prayers of the faithful, as interceding with the Father to send the Comforter, and as coming to his disciples in the capacity of that divine Comforter himself; which are all clearly acts of the Divinity. I shall now shew you how he supplies us with a comparison between the Father and himself, and by so doing, prove that there is a dis-

tinction of persons. "Ye have heard (says he) how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father; for my Father is greater than I." How he, who in the former passages I have read to you, speaks of himself as equal with God, can consistently here speak of himself as inferior, it is not for us to presume to say. I do not think that the urging that Christ speaks here of his incarnation, and in his human capacity, completely solves the difficulty; for whilst he was in the flesh he did not, nay he could not, lay his Godhead aside; he was "very man," but he was also "very God;" and therefore we must receive it as a point of doctrine to be believed, on the authority of Scripture, that Christ was at once equal and inferior to his heavenly Father. That this is Scripture doctrine is matter of fact; and you may

rest assured that those people are either grossly deceived themselves, or labour to deceive you, who say that such doctrines are matters of opinion only. Nay, my beloved, if in the gospel it plainly appear that these doctrines are asserted and maintained, the conclusion must be, that these are gospel doctrines; that though they cannot be explained by man's present faculties, they are points of faith; that "God must be true, though every man be a liar;" that man's wisdom must not exalt itself against the authority of Revelation; and that whatever insuperable objections the deist may have to the Bible, we are thankful for the information it affords us; we worship, at humble distance, the God of the Scriptures; not a Deity who is the phantom of our own imaginations, such as the deists worship; but "believing in God, we believe also in Christ." We discard

all vain disquietude from our hearts; *here* we endeavour to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called;" and *hereafter* we hope to fathom all mysteries, and all knowledge, in that heaven of heavens, the presence of God himself, where "we shall know even as also we are known."

"Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me," said our Lord. I maintain that the religion of the deist, if religion it may be called, must necessarily trouble and distress the human mind,—if *doubt* can trouble it, that is, if *uncertainty*, in matters of the last importance, can distress it. In the former part of the last century, *the religion of Nature* was a great object of study, and the theme of continual panegyric. The Papists had mingled many superstitions with the truths of revealed religion, and had grafted many

oppressive usurpations upon "the liberty wherewith Christ had made us free." This disgusted every body; and many, to get rid of Popery, instead of temperately distinguishing what was *true* in that system from what was *false*, fled away from it, and ran into the opposite *extreme*; and thus, in disentangling themselves from the thraldom in which they were held, they threw aside the gospel itself; and instead of looking into *Revelation* for information in religion, they looked into their *own minds* for it; and called what they found there, *the religion of Nature*. Thus it has happened more than once, that Popery has been the mother of infidelity. Look at what happened not long ago in France. No sooner had the Revolution broken the chain which Popery had cast about the French people, than the whole nation rushed at once into unbelief. Christ was denied; atheism professed by

many; and deism became the prevailing religion of the country. Hence the proclamation, that death was an eternal sleep; hence the elevation of the Goddess of Reason (represented by a strumpet) above the altar of God; hence the institution of theophilanthropism, and I know not what new-fangled inventions. But these ingenuities brought no real *comfort* with them; the imagination was amused, but the heart was still troubled. The existence of a God was at length proclaimed by sound of trumpet; as if the breath of man could make or unmake the Supreme Being; and presently, with the precipitation which distinguishes that volatile people, they took to Popery again: not a little influenced in their silly choice of religion, by the political views of the greatest hypocrite that ever worked his own purposes, by pretending a regard for national worship.

Now here in England we have ever gone more quietly to work. We did not look for true religion in the opposite extreme to Popery. If the Papists believed in God, we did not fly into atheism; if the Papists believed in Christ, we did not become deists; if the Papists believed in the Holy Ghost, we did not sink into Socinianism. If the Papists fabricated five sacraments, and perverted and innovated upon those which were ordained by Christ himself, we did not cast away the legitimate sacraments as things of nought. If the Papists exercised ecclesiastical tyranny, we did not renounce all church discipline. But although just after the abdication of a Popish monarch, the minds of many men were captivated with the religion of nature, Christianity itself has still maintained its ground among us; cleared from the corruptions which debased it, still we are professors of the

religion of Jesus; we have not yet substituted the deistical writers for the Evangelists; we have not yet placed Voltaire in the room of St. Paul: the very names of the English deists, with whom our grandfathers contended, are already unknown to the generality; and we still value above all books, above all treasures, the gospel of Christ.

But what are the *comforts* of deism? what are the *sure and certain hopes* of this proud rival of Christianity? and what consolation does it afford the troubled soul? Now what comfort can there be in doubt, what hope in uncertainty, what consolation in guessing?

I grant you that the *being* of a God is demonstrable from the works of the creation; but then how do they teach us the *nature* of God? or how do they ascertain the degree of concern which God's provi-

dence takes in the moral government of the world? The deists themselves are by no means satisfied on these points.

There are at least four classes of deists. The first believe in a God; but then it is a God framed according to their own minds; and it is certainly not the God revealed in Scripture, not the God in whose name Christians are baptized,—"the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost:" and furthermore, the bolder order of deists utterly deny that the Supreme Being takes any part in ordering and governing the universe; and maintain that he lives in a state of seclusion, occupied in the eternal contemplation of his own excellency, and reckless of what happens here below. The second sort allow that God takes a part in regulating the natural world, but deny that he takes any notice of the morally good or evil actions of mankind; these depend-

ing on climate, on local custom, or the arbitrary constitution of human laws. The third class admit of God's interference both in the natural and moral world; but then they are prejudiced against the doctrine of the soul's immortality, and hold that generation shall succeed generation, in an endless succession of ages, without any restoration or renovation of things. The fourth division of deists believe that God exists, that there is a Providence ruling both the inanimate and the rational creation, and that there is a future state; but then they would have us gather every thing relating to them from the light of nature alone, without making any use of Revelation. So that you cannot but remark the incertitude in which the deists sit, and under which they betray a strange perversion of intellect! a strange preference of darkness to light! "The foolishness of

fools (saith Solomon) is folly;" nor is there any folly comparable to that which is occasioned by the intoxication of self-conceit. Who but a fool (I mean the fool of Scripture—the irreligious fool) would prefer a glimmering taper to the meridian sun? And such is human reason, compared with divine revelation. Doubtless, in the night, and in the absence of the sun, the taper has its utility; and so to men, who have not the light of Revelation to direct their conclusions, reason must be resorted to as the best guide that can be procured. But, enjoying the lucid sunshine which emanates from God's word, it were folly indeed for us to shut our eyes against its cheering beams, and to wander in the twilight of natural religion. "No man hath seen God at any time, (saith the gospel) the only-begotten of the Father, he hath declared him." "Whom, therefore," the

deists "ignorantly worship; him" the word of God makes known unto us. By the sanction of holy Scripture our faith is regulated and settled. We no longer shift about, and are tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine; but the objects of faith become ascertained, fixed, and determinate. We are no longer harrassed by doubts, or troubled by anxieties,—"We believe in God, and we believe also in Jesus Christ." And here is the deficiency in the deist's creed,—that fatal deficiency, which leaves the soul of the unbeliever in trouble and dismay; he knows that he has sinned against the light of nature, and that rule of reason which he prescribes to himself; and he must be sensible that all the sorrow he can possibly feel, cannot do away the sin which he has committed. A just God must necessarily punish sin; and if the deist believe in a future state, or deem God a

moral governor of the world, he has nothing to look for but the dreadful inflictions of awakened wrath. Now here the Christian's mind is at ease; "he believes in God, and he believes in the Son of God," who died to make the sinner's contrition and repentance acceptable with the Father. The death of Christ has ransomed him from the mortal consequences of sin; and for the sake of a dying Saviour, he receives that remission and forgiveness, and that justification, which no repentance could obtain, nor any sorrow supply. The Saviour's merits are imputed to the believer. "In Jesus Christ is no condemnation;" and God will ever receive the penitent who urges his humble suit in his Son's name. Here is the triumph of Christianity over deism. The deist is the prey of doubt, and the victim of despondency; but the Christian knows that

"a broken and a contrite heart God will not despise."

We believe in God, let us also believe in the Lord who bought us; and let us order all our sentiments and actions by the word of God. There we learn, that "doubtless there is a God that judgeth the earth." There we are taught how to pray to, and how to approach him. There we learn the extensive reach of his providence, and are informed that he knows and rules the very thoughts of our hearts,—that "the hairs of our head are all numbered," and that "not a sparrow falls to the ground" unnoticed by him. There the certainty of a future life is disclosed to us. The rewards laid up for the good and penitent, and the punishments awaiting the wicked and obdurate, are fully set forth. We know by what rule we are to be judged—even the gospel; and we know who is to be our judge—even the

Lord Jesus Christ. Here is comfort for the broken-hearted, such as unbelievers can never know. He who hath once been in the flesh, is to be our judge; He is to decide upon our fortitude or our lapses, who hath known the strength of temptation; He, who once laid down his life to save us from the guilt of original sin, is to determine our final condition. Let us approach him with faith unfeigned, in purity of heart and holiness of life. Let us believe in God and in our Redeemer, and he will remove trouble far from us.

"Seek ye the Lord, then, while he may be found, call upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

SERMON II.

EXOD. xxxiv. 5.

And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord.

To know the nature and attributes of the God whom he worships, must ever be an object with man: and this not merely from a motive of curiosity, but from a sense of duty. It is hardly possible to worship God acceptably, unless we know, to a certain degree at least, his attributes and nature. The heathens had incorrect ideas of the Godhead; and nothing could be more monstrous and revolting than many of their

modes of adoring and propitiating the Deity. Our Saviour, in his conversation with the woman of Samaria, objects to the Samaritans, by way of reproach, that they worshipped they knew not what; but "we, (said he, speaking of the Jews,) know what we worship."

Moses, who "was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," but who "esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt," could not but deplore the miserable state of religion in the land where he was brought up; and could not but lament the peril of idolatry to which his brethren, of the children of Israel, were exposed in that land to which he was conducting them. On God's calling to him out of the bush, and sending him to liberate his people, it was as natural, as it was proper, for him humbly to ask the name of the Divine

Person who had spoken unto him:—"And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you, and they shall say unto me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?" It is right that I should here inform you, that in the early ages of the world, the names of persons, things, and places, were descriptive of them; as indeed they still are, if they be analysed and traced to their radical meaning. The Almighty accedes to the request of his servant:—"And God said unto Moses, I AM that I AM;" and he said, "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you:"—That the self-existing, the eternal God, hath sent me: not one of the vanities worshipped by the Egyptians; not one of those men of renown whom a blind admiration, and an idola-

trous fancy, hath ranked with Deity; but the God of my fathers—He, who was before all things, and by his excellent wisdom created the heavens and the earth, and all that in them is, hath sent me.

Perhaps it had been as well, and it had sounded better in English ears, if, instead of "I am that I am," we had read in our Bibles, "I am who am:"—"I am the Being that inhabiteth eternity, from everlasting to everlasting; I existed before the world was, and shall continue when time shall be no more; I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which is, and was, and is to come, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

In the sixth of Exodus, God discloses his name in a more especial manner:—"And God spake unto Moses, and said, I am the Lord, (I am Jehovah) and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by

the name of God Almighty; but by my name Jehovah was I not known unto them." Not that the name Jehovah had not been revealed to them; for Isaac, when he built an altar at Beersheba, invoked the Lord by the very name of Jehovah; but the meaning is, that the Patriarchs had not experimental knowledge of that name, which conveys an idea of the unchangeableness and faithfulness of God. This is the name in which he established his covenant with his people: and he gives Moses to understand, that whereas he had previously been called and adored by the name of Jehovah, he will now give them reason to know that he is indeed what that dread name betokens.

But afterwards, when Moses had been admitted to a conference with God on Mount Sinai, and had witnessed his almighty power, having been himself an instrument,

in the hands of God, of working many stupendous miracles, he wished to know still more of the nature of the God of his fathers; and "said unto the Lord, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me thy way, that I may know thee;" and "he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory." And God answered him, "saying, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy." In the very mode of his compliance with the prayer of his servant Moses, God shewed his mercy. What mortal eyes could look upon the splendour of Jehovah, and survive the light! God said, "Thou canst not see my face; for there shall no man see me and live." "I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand

while I pass by; and I will take away my hand, and thou shalt see my back parts, but my face shall not be seen." We are not to conclude from these expressions, that the eternal and almighty Spirit is clothed in a bodily form. These terms, face, and hand, and back parts, are only used in kind condescension to human faculties; and we are to understand by them no more than this,—that Moses should behold as much of the glory of the Divine Majesty as the eyes of man could sustain. Beside, in all his conferences with the Deity, Moses never beheld the person of God, never saw any visible form, the similitude of any thing which had ever met his eyes; so that the Israelites could have no pretext to make to themselves any representation of the Godhead, which might expose them to the seductions of idolatry. He was witness, as was the whole people of Israel, to many

scenes of terrific grandeur and awful sublimity.

At the delivery of the law, "there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon Mount Sinai, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud, so that all the people that was in the camp trembled; and Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole Mount quaked with fire." Travellers have carefully examined Mount Sinai, (sometimes called Horeb, for these are parts of one mountain,) and there are no remains of a crater upon it, which must have been the case had these phænomena been occasioned by a volcano.

Afterwards, when God complied with the request of Moses, and "descended in the cloud, and proclaimed the name of the

Lord''—when the Lord passed by before him, although Moses saw no corporeal form, he was satisfied that he stood in the presence of God, "and he made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped."

On this occasion, we have no description of the stupendous phænomena which occurred when the Lord passed by. Six hundred years afterwards, Elijah stood upon the same mountain when the Lord passed by, "And a great and strong wind rent the mountains, (the summits of Horeb and Sinai,) and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; and after the wind came an earthquake, and after the earthquake a fire." Probably similar appearances shewed themselves to Moses, when, in the sublime language of the Psalmist, the Lord "bowed the heavens and came down, and darkness was under his feet; and he rode upon a

cherub, and did fly; yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind: he made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies; at the brightness that was before him, his thick clouds passed, hail-stones and coals of fire; the Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice." But, although these glorious manifestations of the presence of God, who is the God of Israel, were disclosed, it is not in them that we are to look for a knowledge of God's nature and attributes: these are not in the wind, these are not in the earthquake, these are not in the fire—they are to be gathered from the proclamation of the name of the Lord;—the Lord passed by and proclaimed before Moses, Jehovah, Jehovah, "the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for

thousands; forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin; and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation."

From these three disclosures of the name of God,—first, when he appeared to Moses in the bush,—secondly, when he delivered the law from Sinai,—and thirdly, in the instance of the text, we learn that he is a self-existing and an eternal Being; and that, consequently, he is the great cause of all things; that he is faithful and immutable, preserving unbroken for ever the covenant which he has been pleased to make with the children of men; that he is infinitely merciful, and infinitely just. It is with the mercy and the justice of God that we have the nearest concern. The Lord is a moral governor, and we must

either stand the objects of his mercy, or the victims of his justice.

All the descendants of fallen Adam are sinners in the sight of God; and the goodness of the Lord, when sinners experience it, is properly styled Mercy. "It is of the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed." "The mercy of the Lord is everlasting; his compassions fail not." "He waiteth that he may be gracious; saying to the sons of men, Will ye not be made clean? When shall it once be?" "Fury is not in him, but he deferreth his anger, and refraineth for the transgressors, that he cut them not off."

These passages of scripture form as it were a comment upon the description of God's attribute of mercy, set forth when his great name was proclaimed. But if the prophets and the records of the Old Testament could thus teach those who sat

under the law of Moses to estimate so highly the mercy of God, how much more highly shall Christians estimate that mercy, exemplified as it is to us who sit under the gospel, partakers of the redemption wrought by Christ Jesus! To them the promises were made; to us those promises are fulfilled. To them, in obscure terms, it was foretold, that the seed of the woman was to bruise the head of the serpent; we know that, in the fulness of time, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, in whom we have remission of sins. To them the sacrifices of slain beasts were enjoined for transgression; whilst, to thinking minds, it must appear impossible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sin: but we enjoy all the benefits resulting from the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, and we know that Christ hath washed us from our sins, in his own blood. To them the mercy of

God was proclaimed, but we have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

The first part of the solemn proclamation made, when the name of the Lord was set forth, is full of comfort to us;—but we must not rest satisfied with any partial consideration of Holy Writ; and, therefore, we must proceed to examine the second part also, which is founded upon the justice of God, who, if he be infinitely merciful, is also infinitely just. It is a great snare to the souls of men to treat of Scripture piece-meal, and to direct their eyes to the mercy of God, without laying before them the conditions on which that mercy may be extended to them, and without which they must not hope to receive it. If the Lord God be merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin,—we

are also taught that he will by no means clear the guilty, and that he visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon children's children, unto the third and fourth generation.

Now, if a man continue in sin, he is a servant of Satan, and at enmity with God; if he lives in guilt, he cannot be an object of mercy: if he practises iniquity, he must be exposed to the wrathful visitation of an offended God. It follows, therefore, that, as the Holy Scripture cannot be so interpreted as to contradict itself, if he expects to be forgiven of God, he must put away his iniquity, he must turn from his transgression, he must repent him of his sin, and then he may hope for mercy. Nor let any one say that this is to make void the office of the Saviour;—far from it: for unless Jesus Christ had died to make atonement for sin, and to impart his grace,

vain were all his sorrows, and nugatory, as to the purpose of obtaining pardon, every effort he could make. Sorrow for sin can never undo the sin which has been committed. Contrition and repentance have no retrospective, retro-active operation. They may make a man lead a better life in time to come; but those bad actions which have once been noted in the Book of Life, still remain recorded in it; and no tears which may fall can wash away the hand-writing of God. And this is the peculiar mercy of God, in Christ Jesus, that, upon repenting sincerely of our sins, putting from us the evil of our doings, ceasing to do evil, and learning to do well, and calling upon God to pardon us for the sake of his Son who died for us, the grace of God will be afforded us, and the righteousness of the Saviour will be imputed to us, so as to have a retro-active effect; to

expunge the very record of our sins, to atone for them, to expiate the guilt attaching on them, and to restore us to our first estate; to justify us, and sanctify us in the estimation of a righteous God. This doctrine is directly proved and supported by what St. Paul saith to the Romans:—"All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." This Scripture speaks in plain terms of "the remission of sins that are past," which can only be forgiven by means of the great propitiation; and even then only by the mercy, the grace, the forbearance of God, for the sake of his Son Jesus Christ. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate

with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins." Before we pray to God in the name of Christ, we must believe in our Redeemer, before we can plead the Saviour's merits, we must have faith in him; and before our past sins shall be forgiven us, we must repent us of them, and turn away from them as becometh the servants of God. And thus it is that repentance and faith are necessary conditions in the Christian covenant. God will by no means clear the guilty; we must not expect grace to abound towards us if we continue in sin. When we turn away from our wickedness that we have committed, and do that which is lawful and right, we shall save our souls alive; we shall find that the Lord God is gracious; that he forgiveth the iniquity, for the commission of which our hearts are full of sorrow; and that mercy, which he lays

up and keeps in store for thousands, shall be abundantly showered upon us, for the sake of that blessed Saviour, who left his native heaven that he might satisfy the justice, and fulfil the law of God, as man's representative and substitute.

Never may we hear repentance preached without faith, nor faith enjoined as a condition of salvation unaccompanied by repentance. Repentance, unaccompanied by faith, will avail nothing to obtain forgiveness of sins; and faith, unevidenced by repentance, is dead, barren, unfruitful, and inefficient. The infidel may be sorry for his sins, but it is the righteousness of the Saviour, whom the infidel rejects, which alone can exonerate him from eternal death. If the believer continues to hold the truth in unrighteousness, the faith which he confesses is but a mockery of God; and if he continues in sin, contrary to the convic-

tion of his own heart, his faith, so far from saving him, will but increase his condemnation. Repentance is not to be deemed the cause of justification, faith is not to be counted the cause of salvation,—the sole efficient cause is God's mercy; the merits of Jesus Christ constitute the procuring cause, and repentance and faith are the conditions of salvation. May the teachers never separate them, and may they ever be found conjoined in the lives and principles of the taught!

I have nearly finished what I have to say on the subject before us, unless you may think it necessary that I should add a few words concerning God's visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children: a procedure which at first sight appears irreconcileable with the justice of God. Language of a similar sort occurs, where God enforces the observation of the second

commandment. It might suffice to refer you to the eighteenth chapter of the prophet Ezekiel, where he explains the meaning of the proverb, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge;" wherein it is directly laid down, that "the son shall not bear the iniquity of the Father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him; the soul that sinneth, it shall die." But, in fact, both in the terms of the solemn proclamation to which Moses was a witness, and in those of the second commandment to the same effect, the visitation of the sins of the fathers upon the children is a visitation of a temporal nature; for in the law of Moses almost all the rewards and punishments relate to this life only, there being no direct mention

made, either in the rewards promised, or the punishments denounced, of a future state. The elaborate discussion by the prophet Ezekiel of this question, determines the case in this very manner, confining the death of the soul, or the punishments of the life to come, to the person of the individual who committeth sin. But most certainly, now, as well as under the dispensation of the law, the sin of the fathers affects the temporal condition of their children in many ways. The gamester, or the squanderer, reduces them to poverty; the traitor convict attaints their blood, and deprives them of their birthright; the felon forfeits their substance; the intemperate libertine ruins their health; the bad liver consigns them to wretchedness, by the dangerous example which he sets them; and so in a variety of instances, in all of which, neither the

sinner nor any one else has a right to impeach God's justice, because the visitation (if under such circumstances we may strictly call it a visitation) is neither more nor less than the obvious result and natural consequences of transgressing God's commandments, and toiling in the trammels of sin.

On God's mercy and God's justice let us rely in the full assurance of faith. May we ever remember, that we have an Intercessor who sitteth at the right hand of God; and, therefore, never despair of being received into God's favour, though through the infirmity of our nature we have greatly erred, or grievously transgressed. The Intercessor facilitates all our appeals to the Almighty,—our heavenly Mediator appeases God's justice, when he is invoked with contrition of heart, in sincere repentance, and in the prayer of faith. Christ

Jesus, who came once into the world to save sinners, for ever liveth to make intercession for them; he will have all men to be saved, and none shall finally be lost, but by their own default. And lastly, let us stand in awe of God's justice. Alas! who could abide it, if Christ had not died for us! "He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them." He shall justify many, saith the Scripture. Be it our study to be included in the number of those who shall hereafter be partakers of the justification, planned by the mercy of God, and accomplished by him who was both God and man.

SERMON III.

LUKE xxiv. 26.

Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?

THERE is hardly any greater mystery in all religion than the necessity, which this and other passages of Scripture prove, for the sacrifice of the death of Christ, in order to remove the sins of the world. Admitting the history of the fall of man, which the frailty of our nature daily tells us is authentic, that some atonement should be made for the guilt of human kind we can easily perceive, and as readily allow; but why it was necessary that the chastisement

of our peace should fall upon the person of the Son of God, and why so heavy a penalty should have been exacted, and of him too, *we* can scarcely conceive, and *some* with difficulty credit.

We know, and can admire the mercy of God in providing any measure for the redemption of man; yet we may sometimes be inclined to imagine that the mercy of God had been more manifest, if the terms of salvation had been made less severe than the shedding the blood of the Son of God. We are much disposed, at least on a first view of things, to think that the Father might have accepted a less compensation than the sacrifice of his own Son. But whatever our feelings, whatever our ideas may be on this subject, we must of force, check the one and reform the other, when Scripture assures us that Christ must needs have suffered, and our Saviour

asks his hesitating and dejected disciples as they walked towards Emmaus, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things?" To this question we must answer, assuredly he ought; it was necessary he should suffer; and seeing that in fact he did suffer, we may rest satisfied that it was not without especial, great, and sufficient cause. It is thus that we must offer up the crude opinions of man's framing upon the altar of God; it is thus that our reason must do homage to Revelation; it is thus that the spirit of man must bow to the Spirit of God.

We have learned, my brethren, to receive whatsoever is set forth in Holy Scripture as the word and the wisdom of God, not to be contravened by our limited powers of reasoning. We are not of those who discard part of the evangelical history from the Sacred Canon, before they can

make up their minds upon the doctrines of Christianity; we, I trust, have not so learned Christ; but whatsoever doctrines are to be found set forth in the Holy Scriptures, those we are ready to accept upon the credit of the Teacher, upon the credit of the authenticity of those sacred pages.

That the necessity for the passion of Christ is a doctrine supported by Scripture, we hope, in the progress of this discourse, to evince; and however much, on a first view of the subject, it may militate against our feelings, and ordinary conceptions of things, we shall find that, mysterious as the necessity is, it is by no means unsupported by argument, as well as by the positive declaration of Scripture; but in these cases I cannot but think the affirmation of Scripture to be of more weight than the induction of argumentation.

These primâ facie suppositions of human reason are grounded on the consideration of God's mercy:—and not without cause: for if was through the mercy of God that the system of man's redemption was first planned. But we must remember that although the mercy of God was instrumental in compassing man's salvation, yet it was the offended justice of God which made the plan of redemption necessary. God is all-merciful, but he is also infinitely just; and therefore, if through the default of man's obedience, man fell, the penalty of that disobedience must be paid before the justice of God could be satisfied, or his mercy admit of and forward the restoration of man to his first estate. Talking of the Divine attributes, (according to our conception of them, as existing to a certain degree in ourselves,) we must admit the justice of God to be more sublime, and

more worthy of the Deity than his mercy: the latter is amiable, and interests our affection, the former is admirable, and commands our approbation and applause. Let us argue the point familiarly in the case of a human judge. He who, placed on the seat of a human tribunal, executes true judgment between man and man,—between man and the letter of the law, without partiality, without suffering fondness or compassion for the criminal to bias him from passing a legal and an equitable sentence,—is counted a conscientious and an able judge; he is looked up to with veneration, and men repose with confidence on the righteousness of his decrees. But suppose him to be of another disposition; one whose softness of temper and susceptibility of pity bend him perpetually to favour the culprit; one whose eyes, overflowing with the tears of human tenderness,

refuse to read the offended statute; one who pardons almost as easily as the criminal transgresses, and requires no advocate to intercede for him: such a man seems born for the encouragement of offenders; his feeble hand wants steadiness to support the balance of justice, the world will cry shame on his weak decisions, good government must suffer, misrule subvert order.

Justice is an attribute of far more dignity than mercy. Justice, in fact, includes mercy within itself; for what is mercy, but a modification of justice? at least, all but the offender will acknowledge this; and in the case of fallen man with God, man stands in the place of the culprit, and while he is suffering the punishment of his own evil deeds, he is very apt to mistake justice for severity. If men could cease to be parties in this momentous cause, they would easily discern and acknowledge the

justice of God; but whether they acknowledge it or no, still God is just, and therefore men are punished. They sinned, and therefore the penalty of sin must be paid; the justice of God must be satisfied. Now justice in a case of this kind must of course, and principally, provide that a penalty be exacted equivalent to the enormity of the transgression; but in this case we know that the degree of guilt was infinite, because the breach of God's commandment was a crime of infinite magnitude; it being committed against, and in despite of, infinite power and absolute authority to enact laws. In what way then, compatible with infinite justice, could this be compensated? Could the sacrifice of one man, or of many, or of all men, satisfy the offended justice of God? The sacrifice of all men would have involved the human race in the plenary consequences of sin; for God had

said to Adam, "Thou shalt surely die;" but still the justice of God had been unsatisfied, because the sacrifice had been limited, whereas the crime was of infinite magnitude; and consequently, here was an utter want of that equivalent which infinite justice must require:—now then the argument begins to bear upon the object in view, and I may ask you whether or no there does not appear a necessity for the interference of such a personage as Jesus Christ, who was "very God and very man;" and who, by being made sin for us, bore the burden of our sin, and by suffering carried our sorrows? The taking of the manhood into God exalted human nature to such a degree, that pure and spotless as it was exhibited in Jesus Christ, fulfilling all the law, both of nature and ceremony, perfect in morality and in religion, and withal suffering death,—the forfeiture of

our guilt was paid by that nature which incurred it; and so adequately paid, as it could not have been, but by Him, who being in the form of God, and equal with God, was made in the likeness of men, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. The disciples going to Emmaus were confounded at the idea of a suffering Saviour; the necessity for the death of Christ was so far from apparent to them, that it staggered their faith, and his sufferings filled them with dismay:—"The chief priests and our rulers (said they to our Lord, who had joined himself to them,) delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him; but we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: but he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart, to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and

to enter into his glory? and beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself."

This suggests to us another argument shewing the necessity for the sacrifice of the death of Christ. Christ is styled in Scripture, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Previous to the lapse of man, the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God had provided a remedy for it: the purpose of Christ's manifestation in the flesh, and passion, is called an eternal purpose. In the law of Moses, the sacrifices which were appointed to be offered, are types and figures of the great oblation of himself, which Christ was once to offer upon the cross. The prophets, as many as speak of the person and office of the Messiah, speak of him as one in great humiliation; as one who was to suffer,—to

be a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and at last to be numbered with the transgressors,—to pour out his soul to death, and to make his soul an offering for sin. Wherefore there was a necessity, that when the Christ came, he should in all points fulfil this description, and answer that prefiguration of him which existed in the law and the prophets. Nothing less than the death of the Redeemer was necessary to identify his person, as well as to complete the work of our redemption; and as Christ died for us, so his passion proved him to be indeed Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write; and therefore, burying doubt and suspense in faith, we need not look for another.

For these reasons, then, that the justice of God might be satisfied "in a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world," which could only be

accomplished "by the death and passion of our Saviour Christ, both God and Man;" and that our Saviour might correspond in his person, manner of life and death, with the descriptions in the law and the prophets; for these reasons we presume to conclude, that it was necessary that Christ should suffer as he did.

We may gather from this necessity some idea of the heinous nature and mortal consequences of sin, which were not to be done away but by the suffering and death of the Son of God. The guilt of sin is to be estimated not merely by the nature of the offence, but the wrong done to the authority of God in the breach of his laws; for "sin is the transgression of the law." Whatsoever is done against the laws, which religion prescribes, is sin; all sin is damnable, and but for the Saviour would involve

the transgressor in the penalty of eternal death: but this is the Christian's comfort, that Christ hath suffered for him; "if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins." All our repentance would do nothing to put away sin, unless Christ had died for us. We cannot undo by repentance what we have done by sin; but by repentance we seek the favour of Christ, and then, through his intercession and his merits, we may be restored to the favour of God the Father. This proper notion of the nature of sin, explains to us that text found in the second chapter of the epistle by St. James, and the tenth verse,—Whosoever shall "offend in one point, he is guilty of all." It is the transgression against the infinite authority of God, which makes the sin; and in whatsoever point, great or little, that au-

thority is set at nought or disregarded, there is sin, there is a crime of infinite magnitude, which nothing but the blood of Jesus Christ can wash away. The crime of our first parents seems not to have been in itself a crime of a deep dye,—not so horrible as murder, not so base as theft, not so monstrous as adultery; but even the eating of the apple, as it was done against the ordinance and in defiance of the authority of God, was actual sin, and involved them, and us who are descended from them, in all the deadly consequences of sin. On the other hand, my brethren, while we console our minds with the reflection that Christ hath died for us, let us nevertheless abstain from sin; for Christ is not to be considered as the minister of sin. And this is the fault of many people of this day who undertake to expound the Scriptures, that, after having enlarged

upon the comfortable doctrine of the sacrifice of Christ for sin, and that it could not otherwise have been put away, there they stop, and neglect to warn their hearers of the danger of committing sin on the supposition that Christ hath made it harmless; thus making him indeed the minister of sin, and his merits subservient to their lusts. Nay, they actually go further, and make the care to maintain good works, which the apostle recommends; that is, to live as Christians ought to live, only not an impious anxiety:—"What," they exclaim, "can your endeavours avail towards your salvation? did Christ leave his work for you to complete? O the pride, the impiety of man! to endeavour after works of righteousness, as though he could do any thing well-pleasing to God;—rest solely upon the merits of Christ, and look for that righteousness which cometh of

faith." But, depend upon this, that it requires a great deal of care and exertion to continue in the path of our duty, and to live as Christians ought; and unless we pay an unremitting attention to our lives, we shall not be able to refrain our feet from evil. Think you that salvation will be forced upon the wicked; and that to them who continue in sin, grace shall abound? Think you that the death of Christ hath purchased an indulgence for sin? Think you that faith will save those whose lives are not formed on gospel principles? What saith our Lord himself—a preacher not like those we allude to, but indeed a preacher of the gospel — "Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven: many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not

prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name have done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity." While then we reflect on the necessity for the passion of the Son of God, let us learn the mortal nature of sin, and let us abstain from it; let us keep ourselves unspotted from the world, that so Christ may not be found to have died and shed his blood in vain.

Finally, duly considering and estimating what Christ hath done and suffered for us, let affection and gratitude lead us to praise, to love, to adore, and obey him. Let his example excite, and his gospel direct us, how to suffer, how to live, and how to die. Let us render thanks to God the Father, for providing and accepting the sacrifice for sin, which Christ

offered us; let us pray for the aid of the Holy Spirit, to cleanse the thoughts of our hearts, to illuminate our footsteps, to lead us, in holiness and righteousness, to the knowledge of all truth, and the understanding all mysteries, and those hidden things of God, which he only knoweth, and of Christ who died for us; let us say, with the Cherubim and Seraphim, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

SERMON IV.

JOHN i. 14.

And the Word was made flesh.

IN the outset of this discourse, it will become us to consider who it is whom the evangelist calls the Word; and afterwards, what he means by this expression, that the Word was made flesh. The first verses of St. John's Gospel give us ample information concerning the first of these particulars: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." That divine Person existed before the creation; for this is the meaning of the expression, "In the begin-

ning." "The Word" had a being before the world was; and to shew us that "the Word" had a personality of his own, the evangelist adds, that he "was with God." Now to say that God was with himself, is mere tautology; but when the Word is spoken of as being "with God," we have a clear description of some divine *Person*, existing together with God from everlasting, or "before all worlds." But to exist with God in the beginning, before the commencement of the mighty work of creation, conveys to us a most exalted idea of the nature of this Person; which indeed the next sentence confirms, for therein he is expressly termed *God:* "The Word was God."

Here are two Persons,—God, and the Word; they are "co-eternal together," for "the Word was in the beginning with God;" and they are "co-equal" in dignity,

for saith St. John, The "Word was God." Some people who read without thinking, and repeat by rote, deem the language of the fathers of the Christian church, as set forth in the Athanasian confession of faith I have just alluded to, obscure at least: I trust, in the instance I have pointed out, nothing can be clearer. He who was "with God" before the creation, was doubtless co-eternal, and he who is termed "God," must needs be co-equal with God. But now there is another point to which I beg to call your attention. If "the Word" be granted to be God—for there is no escaping the plain meaning of this text—What then? the deist says there is a God, and therefore we may ask, what do Christians believe beyond deists? Why, Christians observe that "the Word" has a person of his own,—he "was with God;" and if there had been nothing more intended by

this expression than the deist will allow, St. John need not have added, that "the Word was God;" because in that case, he had affirmed no more than this truism, that "God was God;" to assert which there wanted no Revelation. The evangelist therefore means, that this Person, who was "in the beginning with God," partook of the same divine nature with that great Being whom deists themselves call God. Though the substance of God and the Word is the same, a distinction exists between them; they have each an individual person, though they partake of one common nature.

I hope you now clearly see the propriety of that clause of the Athanasian Creed which warns us against "confounding the Persons, or dividing the substance" of the Godhead. You will find that the language of the Christian fathers is cor-

rectness itself; their caution exemplary; and their doctrines, which, God be praised, are the doctrines of the Established Church, unimpeachable.

Let us now advert to the third verse, (for the second, in order to mark it more strongly, simply repeats the fact upon which the personality of "the Word" rests, viz. that he "was in the beginning with God:") "All things (saith the venerable, the holy evangelist in the third verse,) were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made." Now even deists will allow that "he who made all things is God." St. John asserts that "the Word" made all things; whosoever or whatsoever "the Word" might be in other respects, we cannot doubt but that as he was the maker of heaven and earth, he was very God: nothing can be clearer than this. The consequence is undeniable,

and the argument which leads to it is unforced and direct.—I wish to go minutely into these preliminary points.

The whole of Christianity rests, in my view of things, upon the nature of Him who in the introduction to St. John's Gospel is called "the Word." Think not that this is a question which ought not to be agitated in a Christian congregation. Think not that it is a question turning upon matter of opinion merely, as some of our irreligious heretics have said. It is a question determinable by matter of fact, as purely as any question can be, which involves in it an inquiry to this effect, viz. whether in the body of a certain record such and such expressions occur. This is a sort of question which many of you are called frequently to try in our courts of law. And what is the process?—the jurors call for the record; and they either

examine it with their own eyes, or the proper officer reads the material passages in open court; and whether the record be an Act of Parliament, or whether it be a contract or a covenant between man and man, the clauses speak for themselves, and the common sense of the jurymen presently determines the question. If this be the case with regard to the laws of man, it is the same respecting God's laws; it is the same respecting the gospel of Christ. If this be the case with regard to an ordinary covenant between man and man, it is the same respecting the everlasting covenant between man and God;—such is the New Testament, more properly styled the *new covenant*. Here am I reading certain passages to you, and you may easily judge of the fidelity of the reader. You have the instrument which I recite in your hands; and the passages we are more particularly

busied with at present, are those which have been read in our churches again and again. And thus, even those who cannot read, may judge of the argument before us, if they have been attentive hearers. To them, as to the first Christians, "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." And it is the glory of our country's holy church, that more Scripture is read in her places of worship, than in those belonging to any church under heaven. The Church of England provides for the instruction of the poor man who cannot read, and opens in every parish a church for the poor man to go to: there he may hear the gospel read in its native simplicity; and, as I have said, he may soon determine on the fidelity with which it is quoted, and be able to judge upon the fact, whether the doctrines said to be contained in it are really to be found in its pages or not.

I maintain, that if the nature of the divine Person, called by St. John "the Word," be difficult to be understood, it has been made so by not letting the gospel speak for itself. I am sure, so far as we have gone in looking at our invaluable Record, it has spoken a plain language,—"He may run that readeth it:" and your preacher (whose study and delight it is to be understood by the poor and the unlearned) and his hearers (amongst whom he reckons many men of excellent understanding) have but one opinion on the subject.

We must now look at the fourth verse, which concludes the description afforded us of the nature of the divine Person called "the Word." "In him was life;" doubtless, if the Word made all things, he must be the great fountain of life, the quickening principle of universal nature. Nature is the Atheist's God; but the Christian's God

is the God of nature itself: for what is nature, but the universe, and those laws which govern it? But he that made the universe, and ordained those laws, was "the Word,"—"by him were all things made;" and he, having made all things, is God, as the evangelist styles him,—"the Word (says he) was God." But the life with which the Word was invested, was something more than mere existence; and that which he communicated to the world was something more than mere animal and vegetable life: for the evangelist adds, "the life was the light of men." The Word is therefore the creator and donor of intellectual life. His work is the unperishable soul of man; he gave it those faculties which raise it above the beasts that perish; he endowed it with that reason which enables it to view the Creator in his works, to attain the knowledge of God's attributes,

to discern his wisdom and his goodness, and to draw this obvious conclusion, that having made man, he must needs impart to him his sacred will as a rule of action, and a guide to eternal life. That rule, and that guide, man finds in holy Scripture; the pure and steady light of which illuminates his passage through the labyrinths of error, through the dark mazes of this world; gilds with its mild lustre even the shadow of death, and leads him to the blessed realms of unclouded light, and life everlasting.

Let us now sum up what has been advanced, and what the evangelist has taught us concerning the nature of Him whom he calls "the Word." "The Word" existed from all eternity with God; the Word was a divine Person,—"very God;" "the Word" made all things in heaven and earth; "the Word" was the great principle

of life, natural and intellectual; and the light which he affords mankind, conducts them to everlasting life.

Having thus laid my foundation, and established on the sure word of unquestionable Scripture these leading doctrines, we are prepared to consider the text itself —"the Word was made flesh." The term *flesh* means in Scripture, used in this way, *man*. Thus, saith Moses, in his account of Noah's flood, "all flesh had corrupted their ways," i. e. all mankind had corrupted their ways. The Psalmist—"I will not fear what flesh, i. e. man, can do unto me." Isaiah—"All flesh, i. e. every man, shall see the salvation of God." So much for the Old Testament; in the New, St. Matthew says, "Except those days be shortened, there should no flesh, i. e. no man, be saved; St. Paul, "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh, i. e. no man,

be justified. And again, in St. Peter, where flesh and man are used as convertible terms, "all flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the field." The expression, therefore, is just the same as if St. John had said in the text—"the Word was made man." Now let us recollect the nature of the Word, and who that divine Person was; and the result will be just this—that He who existed from all eternity was made man; that God was made man; that the creator of all things, and the original source of life and light, was made man. At the nativity of Christ this mysterious but most inestimable instance of divine mercy occurred. "God (as saith St. Paul) was manifest in the flesh;" in an human body. And again, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." The incarnation of the Word was necessary in order to effectuate our redemp-

tion. "Christ (saith the apostle) took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham;—it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining unto God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." When man fell, the Almighty, full of mercy, provided an atonement for sin. The seed of the woman, it was foretold, should in after-times bruise the head of the serpent, the original tempter of human kind. Our Lord was the promised Redeemer,—the Lamb slain, in the providential arrangement of God, from the foundation of the world. And thus he who created man stooped from his high estate, and, in process of time, "being found in the likeness of man," became in our stead, and in our behalf, "obedient unto death."

That the mode of our redemption should necessarily be of such a wonderful nature, who can demonstrate? "Who is sufficient for these things?" The wisdom of God leaves the faculties of man far behind. How can man penetrate "the mystery of godliness" working out our salvation? How can man remove the curtain, which as yet is interposed between his eyes and the secret counsel of God? How shall mortal eyes gaze upon that, which "even the angels desire to look into?" Our business is rather to worship at awful distance; to lay hold upon salvation in the mode in which God has thought fit to offer it; to worship the eternal Word "made flesh," our incarnate God; and, with the enraptured apostle, to cry out—"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

However, that which knowledge cannot achieve, faith can effectuate;—faith, which receives the Scriptures as the revealed will of heaven;—faith, which knows the authority of Scripture founded on history, prophecy, miracles, and the internal evidence of holy writ, bows to the voice of God speaking in times past by the prophets to the patriarchs, and, in the latter dispensation of his sacred will, to us by his Son, and the evangelists and apostles, whom his Son sent on their momentous commission to "preach the gospel to every creature."—Faith discerns the truth of the doctrine which has employed our attention this day; and sees clearly, that unless the nature of the Word made flesh be admitted to be the nature of God, the Holy Scriptures, instead of detailing the simple language of truth, become a mass of confusion. If the divinity of "the Word" be denied, we must deny

that a father and a son have the same nature: for God says of Christ, "I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son."

If the deity of Christ be denied, then the Jews executed a just sentence when they put him to death for assuming the divine prerogative: and our Lord himself, "in whose lips was no guile," spake untruly, when he said, "I and my Father are one." The apostles, in calling Christ the Son, "the *only-begotten* Son of God," (for this latter is a name given to none other being,) sufficiently set forth the nature of "the Word made flesh;"—sufficiently, that is to say, to the conviction of common sense, and the assurance of faith. Thus St. John—"and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Christ is called

"the express image of God;"—In him "dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily:"—and if his deity be denied, how shall we interpret his remarkable words to St. Philip?—"If ye had know me, ye should have known my Father also; and from henceforth ye know him and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen *me* hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou, then, Shew us the Father?"

Interpreting Scripture by itself, I think by this time we understand fully the meaning of the text.—I conclude with one argument drawn from reason, in proof of the divinity of the incarnate "Word." Our Lord made atonement for the sins of the whole world when he expired upon

the cross: if this atonement were not, in the language of the Liturgy, "a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice and oblation," it were nothing, or next to nothing. The divine authority was infringed, the divine ordinance broken, when man proved disobedient. No sorrow on man's part could undo the deed which was perpetrated. The death of a man had been an unproportionable sacrifice, an inadequate oblation. The death of a sinful man—and all men are sinners, could no more redeem from death the race of man, than the sacrifice of a bull, a goat, or any other creature. The death of the incarnate "Word" alone could accomplish our redemption; and if Christ's deity be denied, "we are yet in our sins."—But now hath he died for us,—the just for the unjust. The perfect obedience of "the Word made flesh," has obliterated the hand-writing which

stood against us in the Book of Life; "he took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."

To Him, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, the ever-blessed and adorable Trinity, be ascribed all honour and glory, now and for evermore. Amen.

SERMON V.

HEB. xii. 25.

See that ye refuse not him that speaketh: for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven.

THE author of the Epistle to the Hebrews draws many comparisons between the law and the gospel, and in every instance proves the latter more excellent than the former. The prophets of old time spake to the patriarchs in their order; but the Son of God himself, "the heir of all things, the maker of the worlds, the brightness of God's glory," instituted the religion called,

after his name, Christianity. Though of the seed of Abraham, and of the lineage of David, yet was he a high priest after the order of that Melchisedek to whom Abraham paid tythes, and from whom he received a blessing—(now "without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better;") and "David himself calleth him Lord."—Nay, he was of a nature higher than the angels; for "when the first-begotten cometh into the world," the angels themselves are called upon to adore him—"Let all the angels of God worship him." But the angels are far exalted above the nature of Moses; and therefore the mediator of the new covenant is worthy of more glory than the meek founder of the Jewish faith. Moses "was faithful as a servant, but Christ as a son."

The Israelites travelled towards the promised land in search of that rest from

slavery, and repose from travail, and freedom from tyranny, which God held forth to those who had believing hearts. But Jesus hath procured for us that rest, that everlasting sabbath, that eternal redemption and bliss in heaven itself, whereof the rest of the law, enjoined by Moses, was but a faint shadow. Aaron and his successors offered in sacrifice slain beasts, which could never take away sins; but Christ offered up himself, "a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world;" and was the author of salvation to all them that believe. The high priest entered into the tabernacle made with hands, the work of mortal men, and only a figure and an emblem of the true; but Christ is entered into the actual Holy of Holies, the highest heaven, the immediate presence of God, his everlasting Father; with whom he continually dwelleth in glory inaccessible, and

with whom, as our Mediator, he pleadeth our cause, and ensureth our salvation. The children of Israel were brought to Mount Sinai, which burned with fire, involved in blackness, and darkness, and tempest, betokening the terrors of the law; "but ye," saith the apostle to his Hebrew converts, "are come unto Mount Sion, (the spiritual Mount Sion, the joy of the whole earth,) and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are enrolled in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."—Abel's blood called for vengeance, but the blood of the Lamb of God procures for us grace,

mercy, forgiveness and acceptance with the Most Highest.—"See that ye refuse not him that speaketh: for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven." Moses spake on earth by the commandment of God; and that generation who refused to hearken to him, were cut off, and were not suffered to enter the land promised to their fathers: and even so, if we turn away from him who speaks from heaven, we shall not escape from the wrath and the judgment to come, but shall die in our sins; and all the mighty scheme of redemption, the apparatus of the law, (our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ,) the mission of the Prophets, the office of the Baptist, the incarnation, the nativity and circumcision, the baptism, fasting and temptation, the agony and

that sweat of blood, the cross and passion, the death and burial, the resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the coming of the Holy Ghost, will be frustrated in every blessed effect, and every sanctifying purpose, and every saving intention on the part of God.

And here let me impress upon your minds a deep sense of the guilt which must necessarily be incurred by "turning away from him who speaketh from heaven." Shall the salvation of mankind have employed the wisdom, the mind, and the counsel of God for ages; and shall we "turn away from him" that bringeth the good tidings of redemption? Shall the angels have desired to look into the mystery of that grace which is in Christ Jesus, and shall men, sinful men, "turn away from him" that preacheth the gospel of salvation? Shall the Son of God have

condescended to lay aside the glory which he had with his Father, to take upon him our nature, and to die for us; and shall we "turn away from" our heavenly Teacher? Monstrous impiety! Unpardonable insult to the God who made us, and the Lord who redeemed us! And let us reflect a moment on the egregious folly of such contemptuous conduct;—we are lost in error, and shall we "turn away from" the truth? We are bewildered and benighted, and shall we close our eyes to that light which shineth from on high? We are sick, and the pit openeth its jaws to swallow us up, and shall we push away those hands which offer us a remedy, and are stretched out to rescue us from destruction?—Nay, more, we "lie in the grave," and that figurative "death hath dominion over us;" that is, we are "dead in trespasses and sins;" and shall we "turn away from him" who

can achieve a victory over the grave, and can take the sting from death, and cancel our sins and transgressions, so that they shall be no more remembered? What folly, what insanity is this! My beloved, I pray you, hearken; if there be truth in God, if we may believe the New Testament,—such impiety, and such irreligious folly, cannot go unpunished. Be not deceived, God cannot be mocked with impunity. And the strong language of the text is not confined to that single passage; the awful admonition it conveys, meets our eyes again and again in other places. "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy, under two or three witnesses (saith the apostle); of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified

an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"—And again, "If the word spoken by angels was stedfast, (that is, the law, which, saith St. Stephen, the Israelites received by the disposition of angels,) and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"

It undeniably appears, therefore, that as surely as the Israelites of old, who gave no credence to Moses speaking on earth, were cut off, so will those also perish who turn away from Christ that speaketh from heaven. The provisions of the law were

of a temporary nature; and the judicial death which they suffered is but a type of that everlasting destruction which will be inflicted on those who will not listen to the Son of God. This is the point of doctrine which I have chosen for the subject of this day's discourse; and you yourselves, from the passages of Holy Writ which I have just recited, may easily see that it is fully supported by the authority of Scripture; and, my beloved, if these things be so, it deeply concerns you to lay to heart what has been said.

I would willingly answer objections if I knew of any; but I protest, I cannot divine any objections which can be made. You may say, that the doctrine is severe. I am not answerable for that; neither indeed can we, without culpable presumption, call any thing severe which God has ordained, and Christ has left upon record

in the gospel. Our divine Lawgiver has supreme power over the work of his hands; and the clay must not remonstrate with the potter. The reward of faith is eternal life; and the reverse of this proposition is also true; namely, the recompence of infidelity is everlasting death. If we accept the mercies of God with thankfulness, we must receive his judgments with humility. "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?"

But, you may ask, does Christ speak to us from heaven? He spake to the evangelists, the apostles, and his disciples, in the great character of "the Word made flesh," and (what St. Paul, writing to Timothy, calls him) "God manifest in the flesh;" and he declared to his hearers that he "came down from heaven." To them he was, as it were, a voice speaking from heaven;—but does he also speak to *us* from heaven?

Undoubtedly he speaks to us from heaven, as certainly as to the Hebrews to whom the apostle addressed the words of the text. When the Epistle to the Hebrews was written, that same "God who was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, and believed on in the world, had been already received up into glory." He was then bodily removed from this earth; and yet the apostle asserts that he nevertheless spake "from heaven;" using the present time,—"Him that *speaketh* from heaven." How then, you may inquire, farther, does he speak to us from heaven?

First, he speaks to us by the gospel. In that blessed Volume,—call it the New Covenant—call it the New Testament, sealed with the blood of Christ;—call it by what more adequate or correct title you will;—in that blessed Volume, we are sure we have

the words of eternal life. *There* are recorded the discourses of Jesus, those precious revelations which "brought life and immortality to light;" his words still continue to sound in our ears, still continue to "make our hearts burn within us." In the gospel, the eye of faith still beholds him, as it were, present in the body; still sees him go in and out, exercising the sacred functions of his ministry. We view him instructing the Twelve, and sending the Seventy. We follow him now to the desert, —now to the city—now to the temple—now to the Mount of Olives—now to the synagogue; we see him in his holy privacies, continuing apart in a mountain all night in prayer to God; we behold him in the garden of Gethsemane, betrayed into the hands of those who sought his life, affixed to the cross, dying for our sins, and rising again for our justification. Removed

from this lower world, though he now sitteth at the right hand of God, he still speaketh to us in the gospel. He still alarms the confident, threatens the guilty, comforts the contrite, and giveth medicine to those that are broken in heart. He still "speaketh as never man spake;" opens the nature of God to us, and shews us how to propitiate him; we still hear him say—"Repent ye, and believe the gospel." We still tremble when he mentions the worm that dieth not, and the fire which is not quenched; and we still pant for a participation in those glories prepared for the righteous in the presence of God. He still speaketh from heaven; and if we "turn away from him, we shall not escape" from the wrath to come.

Secondly, he speaks to us by his providential dispensations and by his holy ordinances; by the institution of the Christian

sabbath, called, after his name, *the Lord's Day:* by his Sacraments,—Baptism and the Lord's Supper; by the means of grace, by the constitution of his church, and by the voice of his ministers.—Even as it was in the apostolic age, "faith still cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." It has pleased him, who is the source of all power, to give efficacy to human efforts, and to crown with success imperfect endeavours; "it has pleased him, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe." "Weak agents though we be," humanly speaking, yet we come to you with the voice of authority, and we demand a hearing. We ask a hearing not for our own sakes, but for the sake of our great Master who hath sent us. "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves, your servants, for Jesus' sake; in whose name we address you, and

call upon you to accredit us as "ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us;" and we intreat you not "to turn away from him that speaketh from heaven" by our humble instrumentality.—And here I cannot but wonder at the way, and manner, and unedifying spirit in which too many listen to sermons:—surely they are not to be deemed disquisitions delivered for amusement, but for improvement; not as objects of criticism, but as lessons of righteousness; not as displays of talent, but persuasives to godliness. Many listen in the church to what falls from the lips of the minister, purely to gratify a proud spirit of deciding upon his manner of preaching, whether his voice be good, or his action proper, or his language elegant, or his style flowing, or his appeals pathetic, or his learning profound;—no part of all this is the object of preaching, nor is it the

end of hearing. "Take heed (said our Lord) how ye hear." "Turn not away from him that speaketh" to you on God's behalf, and in God's name, and hear what he saith, with a full determination of profiting by the admonition he gives you; and then, depend upon it, whether his voice be good or bad, or his manner of delivery be attractive or repulsive, or his mode of expressing himself be polished or coarse, you will never hear a sermon without becoming better Christians—without deriving lasting benefit to your souls.

Thirdly, "Turn not away from him that speaketh from heaven;" and, "while the day of salvation lasteth, harden not your hearts;"—"behold, now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of salvation." Because, if you will not listen to the kind invitation of the Lord before the sun of that day setteth in darkness, there will

come a time when he will "speak directly, and personally, from heaven," clad in more awful terrors than those which blazed and thundered around the summit of Sinai:—I speak of the Day of Judgment, when they who had audacity enough to turn away from him that now speaketh in mild accents, shall be compelled to hear him utter that tremendous sentence which will irreversibly fix their final doom. Christ now entreats—but then he will command; now "he will have all men to be saved;"—but then he must "render to every man according to his deeds;"—now is the season of mercy—but then cometh the hour when all flesh must abide the award of infinite justice.

And after all, what is it that Christ speaks or announces to us from heaven?—what is it he would have us to do, from which we "turn away?" Would he have

us afflict ourselves? would he plant wild-fire between man and man? would he unchain those furious passions which transform men into demons? No such thing; he only counsels us for our good. He would have us "live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." He would have us "love one another, as he loved us." He would have us co-operate with himself (blessed fellowship and community!) in doing good; in wiping away tears from off all faces: in visiting the fatherless and widows in their affliction; and seeing that they who are in need and necessity have right;—yea, and something more than the dry verdict of justice would give;—what benevolence would suggest,—what pity would whisper,—what philanthropy, called in the gospel charity, would dictate;—in a word, he would bathe our souls in bliss, and steep them in all the

pleasure, and satiate them with all the luxury of religion. He would, moreover, teach us the government of those unruly wills and affections which disturb our tranquillity; and he would fill us with that heavenly-mindedness, which almost elevates us to the condition of angels, and certainly places us above all danger from the cares of this life. He would strengthen us against all the attempts of the enemy of our souls; he would do away the consequences of the Fall, and would restore us to that state of innocence, and consequently of happiness, which man once enjoyed before the transgression of Adam;—in one word, he would perfect our salvation.

May we ever listen to our celestial Teacher, in whom are displayed all the treasures of divine knowledge; may the seductions of the world, the flesh, and the devil, lose all their influence; may we

never "turn away" from him that speaketh from heaven;" but may we ever promptly say with his holy apostle,—"Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life; and we believe and are sure, that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God!"

SERMON VI.

PHIL. ii. 9, 10, 11.

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

BEFORE I enter upon the immediate subject of this discourse, and the precise point of doctrine to be gathered from the text, I would say a few words upon the connexion which this passage has with the preceding verses. Nothing is more dangerous than the looking at a few insulated words of Scripture, without regard-

ing the context. It is thus that monstrous errors have arisen, and have been defended and propagated, in all ages of the church. The text, and the verses to which it is attached, speak of three different periods of Christ's existence:—First, the glory which he had with God before the world was; secondly, his humiliation and suffering; and thirdly, his consequent exaltation. First, "he was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God;"—Secondly, "but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross:"—Thirdly, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name."—To these three states and conditions of the Saviour, all

Scripture bears witness. "By him God made the worlds," "and without him was not any thing made that was made;" with him God held that mysterious communication, when he said, "Let us make man in our image;"—to him said God the Father, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever;" for to the Son that address in the 45th Psalm is ascribed by the apostle to the Hebrews:—and St. Paul, writing to the Colossians, styles him "the Image of the invisible God, the First-born of every creature;" which last expression alludes to the eternal generation of the Son of God. He cannot be deemed a creature in the usual sense of the word; for it follows in continuation, that "by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were

created by him and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist."

Possessed of this degree of celestial glory, he divested himself of it to save mankind;—in the Volume of the Book it is written of him, that to offer his body a sacrifice for sin—he said, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God;"—to redeem mankind; to make that perfect atonement which the sacrifices of the law can never accomplish. Here commenced his humiliation. He came not as a conqueror, but as a sufferer: not decorated with the insignia of royalty, but surrounded with distress and poverty. He is born in a stable; laid in a manger; the ostensible son of Joseph the carpenter;—the place of his nativity unknown to the generality of his countrymen, who called him in contempt a Nazarene, and a Galilean:—"Can any thing good come out of

Nazareth?" said they; and again, "Shall Christ come out of Galilee?" "Search and look; for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." Little did they think, that he was really born at Bethlehem in Judea, the very spot which ancient prophecies had announced as the birth-place of the saviour of mankind.

When he grew up he was in all things like unto man; he increased in wisdom, gradually, as he increased in stature; he was supported by the usual mode of nutrition, so that his enemies said he came eating and drinking; he slept; he was subject to fatigue, not having indeed where to lay his head; he led a life of incessant journeying and constant labour; he was assaulted by hunger, and suffered thirst; he was in all things tempted like as we are; his soul was exceeding sorrowful, and he underwent extreme agony of mind; he

gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair;—he hid not his face from shame and spitting. At length the vengeance of his persecutors was consummated; he exhausted the last bitter drop of that cup which his Father had given him to drink; he poured out his soul unto death; he was numbered with the transgressors, and expired, amidst taunts and mockeries, on the cross;—his dead body was violated; a soldier pierced his side with a spear, and forthwith came thereout blood and water.

Such was the humiliation of Jesus; but now, having risen from the dead, he hath ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God, "angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him." This is the language of St. Peter, who, on the day of Pentecost, in his eloquent discourse recorded in the second

chapter of the Acts, first averred and made known to the mass of believers, this exaltation of the Redeemer. St. Paul, to the Ephesians, expresses himself in terms nearly similar; when God had raised him from the dead, "he set him (saith the apostle) at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." This Scripture nearly tallies with the text—"God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.".

1. Things in heaven:—By this is meant cherubim, and seraphim, and the holy angels in every rank and every degree; expressed in Holy Writ in many places by the words thrones, dominations, principalities, and powers.

2. Things in earth; viz.—All mankind, all rational beings, and particularly the church, of which Jesus Christ himself is the chief corner stone.

3. Things under the earth:—By this is meant the dead. "To this end (saith St. Paul to the Romans) Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be lord both of the *dead* and *living*." To those whose souls are in the place of separate spirits, and whose bodies lie in the grave, to them is the righteousness of Christ imputable; for them hath he made atonement. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made

alive." "Thy dead men (saith Isaiah to the church) shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, (the power of the Almighty shall cause thee to spring up as plants shoot forth refreshed by the dew of heaven,) and the earth shall cast out the dead." St. John beheld, in prophetic vision, the souls of the martyrs, calling upon the Lord, and receiving a portion of the righteousness of Jesus Christ—signified by the well known emblem of white robes. "I saw," said he, "under the altar, the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held; and they cried with a loud voice, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto them." The text

proceeds; —" and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." All people, nations, and languages, are to own Jesus Christ as their heavenly King,—as the Lord of all things—as a Legislator, whose injunctions are not to be infringed, whose decrees bear the stamp of unquestionable authority, and whose ordinances cannot be neglected with impunity. "Holy and venerable is his name," "and his righteousness remaineth for ever." "We must confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." We can only know the nature of God, and the relation in which he stands to our Lord, from Scripture; and therefore as the Scripture informs us that the glory of God the Father is maintained by confessing that Jesus Christ is Lord, we are not to conceive that it can be impaired or diminished by "ascribing"

to Jesus "the honour due unto his name." In honouring of the Son, the honour of the Father suffers no degradation. The Father invested his eternal Son with peculiar dignities, pre-eminences, and offices for the very purpose of securing to him supreme honour, even such honour as is paid to himself, "without any difference or inequality." "The Father (said our Lord) hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him." It is our duty to confess Jesus Christ to be the Lord —and such we must style him; not taking our measure of his nature from the ideas of those who would place him on a level with ourselves, who would count him as the Son of Joseph,—but from the undeceiving verity of Holy Writ, which exhibits him invested

with all the glories of deity, which represents him as the Son of God. Early in his ministry, he himself said, "All things are delivered unto me of my Father;" and after his resurrection, it is written, that "Jesus came and spake to" the Eleven, saying, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

This then is the precise point of doctrine to be gathered from the text,—namely, The super-eminent dignity, and the divine authority of Jesus Christ. What more I have to say, will relate to the way in which we are to acknowledge Jesus to be the Lord; and how we are to bow to his authority as a divine Legislator.

Our Saviour himself has pointed out to us the only fit and acceptable way of confessing that he is Lord; and that is, by yielding him that obedience on our part which he has an undoubted right to expect and exact.

We are his ransomed and redeemed creatures; he has bought us with a price of inestimable value; and an empty homage, the fruit of our lips only, will not suffice. "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"—This is the manner in which he expostulates with insincere disciples, and careless and unprofitable servants: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." The nominal, the speculative Christian, therefore, is in a perilous situation: he carries a badge of his profession, which will be no passport, into the presence of his Divine Master. Christ will have substantial service. To "bow the knee at his name" is commanded; this is not to be left undone: but this outward act of worship will be shadowy and without value,

unless the heart be humbled in his sight; unless contrition melt it, and repentance purify it.—These acts of Christian discipline must be performed,—neither must the other be left undone:—outward expressions of religious affiance are necessary, and these are in the power of hypocrites to manifest; but it is the religion of the heart which makes these outward actions acceptable in the sight of our great Lord and Master. And we must sympathize with, and love one another, if we call Jesus our Lord. There is no surer mark of legitimate attachment to him than loving one another. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." We must bear one another's burthens; we must support a falling, and pray for an obdurate brother; we must forgive enemies, and endure with patience the remonstrance, and receive with thank-

fulness the timely rebuke of a Christian friend. "Faithful (it is written) are the wounds of a friend." We must abstain from venting or spreading calumnious reports to the injury of our neighbour. We must repress, manfully, the malignant activity of the agents of the devil,—those who separate chief friends,—the whisperer, the tale-bearer, and the backbiter. We must harbour no malice towards, nor think evil of, each other; but we must ever be prompt to knit together those bands of affection which untoward accident or unexpected occasion have burst asunder.

The crown of everlasting life, which our Lord shall bestow on his faithful followers at the last day, cannot be won without exertion, without undergoing hardship, indeed; in working out our salvation, we must endeavour to maintain our spirit unbroken, by viewing, with the eye of faith,

the recompence of reward. Our Lord said, in strong language, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters; yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple;—and whoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." It will become us, therefore, to deny ourselves; to check our wandering imaginations; to moderate our desires; to "live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world;"—remembering always that we are the disciples of a suffering Lord; and therefore, whether we shall be afflicted, or suffer want, or be persecuted, and evil intreated, and evil spoken of, or derided and laughed to scorn;—we must follow after and look unto Jesus, who suffered many things; who "bore the contradiction of sinners against himself, lest we should be weary

and faint in our minds." The great Captain of our salvation was made perfect through sufferings; and we believe and are persuaded, that "if we suffer with him here, we shall also reign with him hereafter."

Whatsoever be our lot in the world, we have all our peculiar trials to undergo, whether of adversity or prosperity. This world is a place of trial and probation; and he who expects to reach heaven, walking heedlessly, or indolently, will most assuredly be defeated in his expectations. We must be all vital activity; and we must persevere unto the end. We must be fruitful in the good works of Christian obedience; the only unequivocal proof of a lively faith; productive of far more glory to God than all the words we can employ, or all the genuflexions we can make. "Herein (said Jesus) is my Father glori-

fied, that ye bear much fruit: so shall ye be my disciples." — And the great apostle charges Titus to insist upon this continually in his preaching: — "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men."

Nor will it be difficult for us, through God's help, to work out our salvation, if we bow to the authority of Christ as a divine Legislator, and use those means of grace which he has appointed. Very proud, self-willed, and self-conceited must they be, who use other modes of recommending themselves to God's favour, and testifying their allegiance to the Lord Jesus, rather than those which he himself has appointed. "Go wash in Jordan seven times," said the Man of God to the leprous

Syrian Chief, who "turned and went away in a rage." "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them and be clean?"—Many men, "wise and prudent" in their own estimation, argue in a like manner in these our days. Of what use are the waters of baptism? ask they. What magic is there in the font to wash away sin, the leprosy of the soul?—Of what use is it to break bread and drink wine in remembrance of Christ? We deem ourselves as good Christians as any of those who occasionally kneel at the rails of the communion table;—and we never receive bread nor the cup at the hands of the priest in the house of God;—and we never feel ourselves a bit the worse for it: And as for the Lord's Day, why need we go to church upon it? We can say our prayers at home; and if we are curious to

know God's will, we can read our bibles at home. Yes, my beloved, this is the way in which too many argue—but confessing Jesus Christ to be *Lord*;—we will humbly do as the gospel directs us. We will not answer again to our Master in heaven; we will humbly obey him, well knowing the authority which he hath to constitute positive ordinances. The laver of regeneration, when he gives a blessing to it—a blessing which ever is granted to diligent prayer, has more virtue than the pool of Bethesda: that cured the body, but this saves the soul; that restored a diseased limb to its use, but this makes us members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. And as to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper—if Christ be our Master, where is his honour? If he be our King, where is his fear? If he be our Lord, where is his homage? Shall we not

do as he commanded us? Shall we not observe his last injunction? Shall we not fulfil his parting request? Shall we not keep his dying ordinance?—His awful words leave true Christians no alternative—everlasting life seems to be suspended on the condition of solemnizing this mysterious rite. "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." Lord Jesus, at thy name we bow our knees! Thou art our Lord! May our hearts be closely united unto thee! For ever may we zealously use every opportunity which offers itself, of remembering thee in that way which thou hast ordained! For ever may we use the blessed means of grace which thou hast appointed! May our feet

lead us, willing, not constrained attendants, to this house of prayer! There may thy word read or preached to us have all its salutary influence upon our minds and affections; there may all our prayers be heard! Thou, we know, art in the midst of us, where two or three are gathered together in thy name, willing to hear us, ready to succour us, mighty to save!

To Thee, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, the ever-blessed and adorable Trinity, be ascribed all honour and glory, now and for evermore! Amen.

SERMON VII.

GEN. iv. 4, 5.

And the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering: but unto Cain and to his offering, he had not respect.

GOD, being the Judge of all the earth, the moral Governor of the universe, cannot but determine rightly concerning all persons, and in all cases. The judgment of Almighty God can never be swayed by caprice, or influenced by partiality; and although it is not disclosed to us in Scripture, on every occasion, why God prefers one man and his descendants to another man and his posterity, as in the remarkable instance quoted by St. Paul from the last of

the prophets, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated;"—we may rest assured that the making the younger lord over the elder was grounded on some substantial reason, to us unknown.—Why should God have respect unto Abel and his offering, and not have equal respect to Cain and his offering? Why should one be grateful and the other unacceptable to him? They were brethren, the sons of one man, the worshippers of one God;—they had no rivalry of calling; for one was a keeper of sheep, and the other a tiller of the ground; and when they came before the Lord, they each offered of his peculiar substance: one brought of the fruit of the ground, the other of the firstlings of his flock; every thing seems equal on either side, and yet God receives one offering and rejects the other; countenances one man and disapproves of the other. All this is recited in

the fourth chapter of Genesis; and, in order to obtain a solution of the difficulty, we must turn to the eleventh chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, where we are told that it was "BY FAITH that Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain; by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts." That is, God, by some outward and visible sign, gave testimony to the acceptance of his oblation; probably by sending fire from heaven to consume the offered victim.—"Without faith it is impossible to please God." Abel's offering was accompanied with this indispensable condition of acceptance; but Cain's was destitute of it; and this the very offerings themselves seem to prove. It has been conjectured, and not without good ground, that when God is said to have clothed Adam and Eve with coats of skins, he

taught them to make garments of the skins of animals offered in sacrifice. It does not appear that God had indulged men with the grant of animal food, until after the Flood; if, therefore, these were slain beasts, in all probability they must have been victims offered to God. Now, it is not to be supposed that man could have invented sacrifices from the dictates of his own mind. Death was the punishment threatened by the Almighty for sin; and it is not likely that man could have conceived the idea of propitiating God, by laying on his altar animals deprived of life, and presenting the dreadful spectacle of death, the accursed consequence of transgression. It is much more probable that sacrifices were enjoined by the special command of God; that man, in the death of the victim, might discern the inevitable effects of sin; that he might be taught that the Divine

Justice will ever exact the penalty which it hath decreed; that without shedding of blood, there is no remission; and that in the offering of the prescribed sacrifices, he should see, in luminous prefiguration, the death of "THAT JUST ONE," who, in process of time, was to make an offering of himself for the sins of the whole world. The Patriarchal, the Mosaic, and the Christian dispensations, are all parts of one great whole; and God seems to have pursued an uniform plan in the religious institutions of each religion; namely, such a one as might keep up *a lively faith* in the minds of its members. The death of Christ is expressed, under the *Christian* dispensation, by the breaking of bread and drinking of wine in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper;—it was delineated in a variety of forms under the *Law*,—and, therefore, we may conclude that it was set

forth in *the sacrifices* offered in the *patriarchal* ages. The Bible history is a very brief one; the transactions of the world, from the Creation to the Flood, a period of 1656 years, occupy but six chapters of the Book of Genesis; and we know that an account of many important transactions is omitted. Moses makes no mention of Enoch's prophecy, of Noah's preaching, or of the original peopling of the world before the Flood; and in the offering of Cain and Abel, he does not intend to shew us the first institution of sacrificing; he merely speaks of it as eventually occasioning the first murder committed in the world. However, although Moses speaks not of it, there can be no doubt but that sacrifices were originally ordained of God. It is at least probable, that they formed a part of Adam's religion after the Fall, when the prospect of a Redeemer was first dis-

closed; and that they were offered by *believers* in every age; by *Abel*, distinguished by his faith; and by *Noah*, a preacher of righteousness.—"Faith (saith St. Paul) cometh by hearing;" and we may conclude that the faith of Abel, which induced him to make his offering, was derived from the tradition of his father Adam, who instructed his posterity in the proper mode of worshipping and propitiating Almighty God. And here we shall find the distinctive mark of acceptability which appeared in Abel's offering, compared with that of Cain. Cain offered an unbloody sacrifice, of the fruit of the ground; but Abel offered the firstlings of his flock, *which afforded a type of the great sacrifice*—"the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world;"—Cain's offering had no reference to the death of Christ; but Abel's represented it:—Cain's offering

seems to have been a sort of "*will-worship*;" but Abel's was an offering prescribed by God:—one might be deemed an homage of gratitude, but the other was an offering of faith:—one was the unbidden dictate of reason, the other a compliance with the demands of religion.—God alone has a right to lay down the *essentials* of divine service—to appoint sacrifices, or to institute sacraments; and it is not for man to say, "I will serve God after the imagination of my own heart." This was the defect of Cain's offering,—it infringed the standing rule of sacrificing established by God, and practised by his penitent father and his righteous brother:—I call Abel *righteous*, for so Jesus Christ himself calls him, in the twenty-third chapter of St. Matthew.

It is thought, and I think justly, by many commentators, that the conversation with

which God graciously favoured Cain, had a reference to the form and manner of his sacrificing. Cain, seeing that God accepted Abel's offering and refused his, "was very wroth, and his countenance fell. And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth, and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou do well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door." As if he had said, "Why do I remark these signs of sullen discontent in thine altered countenance, because of my rejecting thy sacrifice and accepting thy brother's? Alter thy conduct." "Worship" me "with holy worship," not with devices of thine own, and I will accept thee; but if thou persistest in error, thou canst not expect that remission of sin which is only to be obtained by the shedding of blood—not the blood of the animal—but that precious blood of

which that of the sacrifice is but the figure, type, and emblem; and which, whosoever does not discern with the eye of faith, shall not be profited by the blood of slain beasts.

"Whatsoever things (saith the apostle) were written aforetime, were written for our learning." It remains, therefore, that we make what has been said useful to ourselves. It is of no service if we read the Bible with the eyes of secular curiosity only. We must apply whatsoever we find in it to our own condition and our own hearts. We must be admonished by the transgressions of others, and edified by the example of those who, in their day, walked well-pleasing unto God. The eyes of the same great Being, who beheld our first parents in their state of innocence, and the religious conduct of their sons, are upon us in our generation. "He is the

Lord; he changes not." His judgment is guided by the same principles which influenced him in the beginning. He respected the faith of Abel, and respected not the will-worship of Cain;—and we may rest assured that faith will still render our religious services acceptable to him; that still the want of it will render them of no value, but rather hateful in his sight. The religious services of self-willed men are much upon a par with those works before justification, of which the 13th Article of our church thus expresses itself:—"They are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ; ....yea, rather for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin."

It was Faith which made Abel's offering acceptable unto God. We Christians are

absolved from all obligation to sacrifice animals; we are not required to offer either the firstlings of our flocks, or bullocks, or heifers, or goats. *One* offering is made for us;—"Christ our passover is slain;"—and the only religious rite which can place us in a similar predicament to that of the two persons mentioned in the text is, *the sacrament of the Lord's Supper;* which is not a sacrifice, as the Papists vainly pretend, but a feast upon a sacrifice. In old time, that is, under the Patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations, the victims were offered in sacrifice; part of the body and fat was consumed in the fire of the burnt-offering. Abel (it is written) brought of the firstlings of his flock, *and of the fat thereof;* and the remainder was feasted upon by the parties making the offering, and their friends; the priest receiving his portion. But in the case of the Lord's Supper, the

sacrifice is in heaven, whither our Saviour Christ hath ascended; and no part of the victim can be touched; but the Lord Jesus, on the institution of the blessed Sacrament, appointed emblems both of his body and blood, which are eaten and drunken in remembrance of him. The Papists, who have fabricated the doctrine of transubstantiation, and maintain that the bread and wine are changed into the very body and blood of Christ by the act of consecration, call the solemnization of the Lord's Supper "*the sacrifice of the Mass;*" and assert that Christ is offered up a propitiatory sacrifice as often as mass is celebrated. This is nearly to bring back again the daily sacrifices of the law of Moses;—this is to degrade the Saviour; this is to do that *frequently* which was done "*once for all,*" when Christ offered up himself upon the cross; "this he did ONCE, when he offered up himself,"

saith the apostle to the Hebrews: and again, "Christ was ONCE offered to bear the sins of many, and unto them that look for him shall he appear the *second* time, without sin, unto salvation." No; Christ is in heaven, where he "sitteth at the right hand of God;" and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was ordained "for the continual remembrance of" his death; and Christians eat of the same bread and drink of the same cup, in the manner of a solemn feast following on that sacrifice which was once offered; in which they eat not *the very body*, but the bread which represents it, and drink not *the very blood*, but the wine which sacramentally figures it; and this is what makes the eucharist *a sacrament*—this is what affords that "outward and visible sign" which is essential to the very being and constitution of a sacrament. There is something revolting in the idea of

eating the body and drinking the blood of Jesus; the Jews, who did not understand the meaning of our Saviour, but received his expressions literally, as the Papists do, were shocked at the proposition, and deemed it nearly a thing impossible: "How can this man (said they) give us his flesh to eat?" In the sacramental bread and wine, the body and blood of Christ are not *actually* present, but they are *virtually* there; the *eye of flesh* does not see them, but they are visible to the *eye of faith*. "The body and blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken and received *by the faithful* in the Lord's Supper;" so that, unless we come to the Lord's Table as Abel approached his altar when God accepted his offering, "*by faith*," the sacrament becomes a thing of nought to us; it ceases to be that very thing which Christ intended; and to unbelievers it sinks into a vain ceremony:—but

I must say more upon the subject. They who approach the Lord's Table without faith, are guilty of such profanation as must necessarily expose them to the just judgment of almighty God; for this is the very point which is so grievously mistaken by many people in the well-known passage of St. Paul to the Corinthians:—"He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation (the marginal translation says judgment) to himself, not *discerning the Lord's body*." The point of criminality, or rather of sin, here, is not discerning by faith the Lord's body;"—*this* is to eat and drink *unworthily*, that is, in an unworthy manner;—*this* is to *provoke God* to wrath, and to cause him to afflict us with temporal judgments; as saith our church, "we provoke him to plague us with divers diseases, and sundry kinds of death;" and this may quiet the appre-

hensions of many weak brethren among us. St. Paul makes no mention of *eternal damnation*, but simply speaks of *temporal judgments*: "For this cause," says he, (that of not discerning the Lord's body in the sacrament,) "many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep," that is, have died. Now what shall prevent our incurring God's judgments?—In one word—FAITH:—the self-same frame of mind which made Abel an accepted worshipper, will present the Christian a worthy receiver of the Lord's Supper. He will not look upon the sacrament as an ordinary meal; he will not look upon it as a mere external rite; he will not kneel at the rails of the altar, as an occasional conformist to compass some worldly purpose; he will not go thither for form-sake, because it is not reputable to be absent; but he will go thither in full assurance of faith; he will

discern Christ's body in the bread which is broken, and his blood in the wine which is drunk: whilst he reverently feasts with his brethren upon the sacred elements, he will look with the eye of faith to heaven itself, and there he will discern the Lord's body clad in glory; he will recognize him as the Mediator between God and man; and whilst he devoutly breathes a prayer to his great Intercessor, and laments that sinfulness of man which made so great a sacrifice necessary, and heartily detests sin which tends to render the great sacrifice of no avail to him; "the body and blood of Christ strengthen and refresh his soul, as his body is strengthened and refreshed by the bread and wine:" the grace of God follows the use of the appointed means of obtaining it; and the Sacrament becomes a pledge, to the believing Christian, of God's helping his endeavours

here, and crowning him with glory hereafter.

Whilst I mention *faith* as the great requisite in approaching the altar, you are not to conceive that it is the *only* one; but at the same time I most earnestly beseech you not to rack your inventions for such qualifications as the church does not require, or distress yourselves in endeavouring to attain such a degree of holiness as man's nature can hardly, if ever, arrive at. The Sacrament was ordained for penitents, not for those who are perfect; and if you wait for perfection in righteousness, death will overtake you before you come to the Lord's Table, and put a stop to your vain efforts. If, however, perfection be your object, you are grievously deceived if you think you can reach it without the use of the established means of grace. Worship God as the gospel teaches you, and stand not obsti-

nately in *will-worship;*—if you be convinced that Christ instituted the Sacrament, "draw near with faith, and take" it "to your comfort," using such preparation as the church prescribes to her members:—And what says the Church upon the subject?—I shall give you her sentiments in those very words, which in a few minutes I shall read from the altar:—"Judge yourselves, brethren, that ye be not judged of the Lord; repent you truly for your sins past; have a lively and stedfast faith in Christ our Saviour; amend your lives, and be in perfect charity with all men; so shall ye be meet partakers of those holy mysteries." This is all that the church looks for in communicants to lead them to the Lord's Table; and when there, she expects her devout children to be duly grateful to God "for the redemption of the world, by the death and passion of our Saviour Christ."

No more is required here than is fairly in the power of every Christian to perform. May God give you willing minds, and feeling hearts! May the truths which he has enabled me to utter, approve themselves to your understandings! May all prejudices be subdued by his grace, and your apprehensions appeased! May we live as members of one body, having faith in God, doing that in remembrance of his Son, which he specially appointed for the best of all purposes! May we communicate with each other here in the participation of the Holy Sacrament: and, finally, may we be admitted to the communion and fellowship of the saints in the mansions of eternal bliss!

SERMON VIII.

PSALM lxviii. 18.

Thou hast ascended on high; thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.

THIS Psalm is believed to have been composed by David upon bringing up the ark of the testimony to Jerusalem, sixty years after it had been sent back to the Israelites by the Philistines, into whose hands it had fallen. The king erected a tabernacle to receive it on Mount Sion, called the City of David; for he had himself taken it from the Jebusites. Many sacrifices were offered upon this occasion; and the whole

multitude of the people received portions of the offerings, and were feasted, "when David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord, with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet." A part of the *ancient* solemnities seems to have been observed; at least, as far as relates to the elevation of the ark on the shoulders of them who bare it; for of old time, when the ark, in the journeying through the wilderness, set forward, "Moses said, Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee." The Psalm opens with similar expressions:—"Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered; let them also that hate him flee before him."—There are *many* glorious passages in this Psalm, which rank it in the very first class of specimens of sacred poetry, and exalt it above all the productions of those men of

genius, who were the boast of Greece and Rome. But we can only employ our attention upon *one* of them at present,—namely, the text; which not only relates to the carrying up of the ark of God into the hill of Sion, but to the ascension of our Saviour into heaven; of which the depositing of the ark in the tabernacle was a type. The covering of the ark, made of solid gold, called the Mercy-seat, partly overshadowed by the wings of carved cherubim, was the place where the Divine presence was more especially held to be. God is frequently appealed to in Scripture, as "sitting between the cherubim:" and when the ark was carried up into Mount Sion, the Almighty himself was addressed as having ascended thither.

"*Thou hast ascended up on high.*"—Thou, God of our Fathers, the worship and strength of Israel, hast ascended up

on high, from the humble habitation of obscure men, to the city of a King; to a tabernacle, pitched by the command of a Sovereign, to receive the ark where thine honour dwelleth."

"*Thou hast led captivity captive.*"—Thou hast given victory to thy servant David. Thou hast given him rest on every side. Thou hast overthrown them who overthrew thy people. The Philistines, who once made captives of the children of Israel, and counted the ark of the covenant among the spoil and booty, are now themselves defeated. The Jebusites are subdued; and their chief city Jerusalem is the place made illustrious by the glory of thy presence. Those who held thine heritage in captivity are become captives themselves.

"*Thou hast received gifts for men.*"—Receiving, thou hast given gifts among men. Thou receivest praise, and thanksgiving,

and homage from thy people; and givest them peace, gladness of heart, and sure confidence in thee. Almighty Sovereign of the Universe, and King of thy people Israel, taking possession of thy royal pavillion, the tabernacle in Shiloh which thou hast pitched among men, thou scatterest the largesses of divine bounty, and pourest thy benefits upon them.

"*Yea, even for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.*"—They who have often provoked thee to anger, by rebelling against thy laws, and disregarding the rod of thy power, as if it were not a right sceptre; even those are partakers of thy blessed gifts, who now enjoy all things in thy divine presence; and can now fear no enemy, whilst the ark, whereon thou art enthroned, continueth among them; whilst they who might have looked for judgment, obtain mercy.

In paraphrasing thus the text, we encounter considerable difficulties. Several of the expressions are obscure, and indeed can hardly be construed as applicable to God, unless great liberality of interpretation be allowed, and the remoter sense of the words be called in to elucidate their literal meaning. I advert here particularly to the phrase, "Thou hast received gifts for men."—Now, of whom can *God* receive gifts which he may bestow upon men? Calling in the best lights which I could command from expositors, and looking at the words in all their bearings, they are still replete with difficulties;—I mean, considered in their *primary* sense, as used by David, and applicable to God. But, turning to the New Testament,—explaining the type by the antitype,—the emblem by the reality; the existing difficulties, in the primary meaning of the text, nearly vanish;—

or, if any remain, they certainly are not found in the unreserved application of the entire passage to Jesus Christ by St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Ephesians. On reading the law, and examining its apparatus of ceremonies, we are struck with surprise at the multitude of ordinances, at the costly splendour of some of its rites, and the minute particularity with which others of them are enjoined. Some people have derided these circumstantial injunctions; and, indeed, taking them *abstractedly* and *by themselves*, they seem a mass of "superstitious vanities." But looking at them, as *referring ultimately to Christ*, and viewing the gospel as fulfilling the law, and Christianity completing what Judaism foreshadowed; we must contemplate the legal provisions with reverence, and be grateful to God for that curious appointment of small peculiarities in the

antitypes, considering the exactness with which they verify the types themselves.

Having studied, then, the literal meaning of the text, let us now look at its *mystic*, its *secondary* sense, with which we are furnished by the Apostle, who enables us, I think, fully to understand its most obscure expressions, when applied to the Redeemer. St. Paul, in the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, speaks of "the grace given unto every one according to the measure of the gifts of Christ."—"Wherefore, (adds the Apostle,) he (that is, the Psalmist) saith, when he (that is, Christ) ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." These words, then, of the royal Prophet relate, in their final sense and application, to the ascension of the Lord Jesus into heaven. "*Thou hast ascended up on high.*"

Our Saviour, in the presence of many witnesses, probably above five hundred, ascended bodily into heaven, forty days subsequent to his resurrection. By the word *Heaven*, is *here* to be understood—*the immediate presence of God;* not the visible heavens in which the planets roll, and wherein the stars are fixed. The Apostle says, " he ascended up far above all heavens," far above the material heavens, and is entered into that place where the throne of God stands; and is set " down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." When Moses made the first tabernacle, he formed it to " serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things."—In this tabernacle there were two parts, divided by a curtain or veil; the outer division was called the Holy Place, and the Sanctuary; but the inner division was denominated the Holiest of All, or the Holy of Holies; and

represented, emblematically, the highest heaven, where the Deity resides in glory inconceivable, and, consequently, unspeakable. David, no doubt, constructed his tabernacle after the same fashion; and we know that Solomon built his temple after the same plan. As then David carried the ark into the Hill of Sion, and deposited it in the most holy recess of the tabernacle; so Christ ascended into heaven itself, "now to appear in the presence of God for us." The words which we are now considering, therefore, may be thus paraphrased:—"O Lord Jesus Christ, thou camest forth from the Father, to do his will, to take upon thee our nature, and to taste of death for every man; and having finished the work which God gave thee to do, thou art gone into heaven, and hast resumed that state of glory which thou hadst with the Father before the

world was. Thou hast ascended up on high."

"*Thou hast led captivity captive.*"—God "delivered David his servant from the peril of the sword," and from his cruel enemies, and set him up above his adversaries, punishing those that had oppressed, and afflicting those that had afflicted him. God gave captive into the hands of David those who had taken captive David's people. But the *Son of David, the Lord Jesus Christ*, conquered the powers of darkness, who had held captive the whole human race; "he spoiled principalities and powers, and made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in his own person." He redeemed us from the curse of the law, and reinstated us in that condition, from which Adam by transgression fell. He subdued sin. That figurative *strong man armed*, who kept his palace, filled with

unrighteous spoils, and remained in proud security, no one daring to attack him, could not stand before the great Captain of our salvation, who was stronger than he; Christ came upon him, took from him all his armour wherein he trusted, exposed and defeated all the stratagems invented by the grand deceiver, divided his spoils, opened the dungeon of his prison-house, and let all whom he held in bonds go free. *He conquered Satan.* And death, which had dominion over all flesh, could not retain the Lord of Life in the grave. It was impossible that he could be holden of it. He descended into the place of separate spirits, grappled with the tyrant in his own fortress, and through death overcame the power of death; he unbarred the gates of death; and, finally, abolished that dread consequence of sin, and brought life and immortality to light. And thus *he led captive*

those who held the souls of men in captivity.

"*Thou hast received gifts for men.*"—This expression, applied to God the Son, has no obscurity in it. On making his triumphant entry into heaven, he showered gifts upon mankind, which he had received at the hand of God, and conferred conjointly with him. Previously to his decease, he said to his disciples, "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you:" whence it follows, that his ascension into heaven was *necessary*, in order to enable him to accomplish this promise, and that unless he returned to heaven, the Holy Ghost would not fall upon the disciples. The whole multitude of believers waited for the fulfilling of this gracious promise; and in due time, received gifts of greater value

than the gold or jewels which temporal conquerors were accustomed to scatter among the people in their triumphs. To the infant church he gave precious gifts;—"apostles, prophets, and evangelists, pastors and teachers,—for the perfecting of the saints—for the work of the ministry—for the edifying of the body of Christ,"—for so is the church called, "Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." There were diversities of gifts; to one was given by the spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge; to another faith; to another the gifts of healing; and to others the working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, divers kinds of tongues, the interpretation of tongues; all given by one and the self-same spirit, after the ascension of Christ into heaven. These were *extraordinary gifts*, communicated to *some* for the benefit of *all;*—but

upon the mass of believers were poured abundantly, *the ordinary graces* of the spirit; serenity of soul, and joyfulness of heart; appeased consciences; subdued passions; faith, which overcame the world, a sure and certain hope of everlasting life; and, above all, charity, which never faileth, which outlasteth time, and uniteth in one holy fellowship the whole family in heaven and earth, men, angels, the spirits of the just, Christ our Redeemer, God the Father, and the Holy Ghost, the author of all consolation.

Nor was it only upon the *righteous* that these heavenly gifts were bestowed; but Christ "*received gifts for the rebellious also.*"—To whom can sinners turn their eyes for salvation, but to Jesus Christ, who died for them, "the just for the unjust?" No sorrow for sin can obliterate that handwriting which standeth on record against

transgressors; no tears can wash away the characters traced by the finger of God in that book out of which the quick and the dead are to be judged. Contrition may arise in the hearts of sinners, but unless Christ had died for them, a sense of guilt had only made their dejection of spirits the more intolerable, and instead of exciting them to penitence, and animating them with hope, had overwhelmed them with despair. But this is the peculiar boast of the gospel, that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth" true penitents "from all sin;" and that "if any man sin, he hath an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for his sins." Thus *even the rebellious* are partakers of the gifts distributed by the Almighty Conqueror of sin and death. Thus, by the gracious provision of God's mercy, those who had renounced their allegiance to him, are received into

favour, and are restored to that birthright which they once forfeited,—the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven.

These gifts were given to men, "*that the Lord God might dwell among them.*" When David placed the ark on Mount Sion, he extolled it above the proudest hills, as "the joy of the whole earth:" "This (says he) is the hill which God desireth to dwell in, yea, the Lord will abide in it for ever." And afterwards, when Solomon built on Mount Moriah his temple, wherein the ark was deposited, he rapturously asks—"But will God, in very deed, dwell with men on the earth? Behold, heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built." These mansions, however, of "the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity," were but of *temporary continuance;* and the term "*for ever,*" used by the Psalmist, means but

until the end of the Mosaic dispensation. The Law and the Prophets were until John; since his time the kingdom of heaven is preached,—the local residence of God no longer exists. From his throne, which is in heaven, he beholdeth with equal eyes all the kingdoms of the world; his spirit occupieth the infinitude of space; or, if he dwelleth any where, in any more especial manner, *it is in the hearts of the faithful,* "whose bodies (saith St. Paul) are the temples of the Holy Ghost:"—and again, "Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." Our Saviour foretold this indwelling of the spirit:—"I will pray the Father, (says he) and he will give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world (the unbelievers

and unregenerate, that is,) cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless, I will come unto you."—And thus doth the gospel explain the language of the Psalmist, and sheweth in what sense "the Lord God dwelleth among men."—Yes, he dwelleth in our hearts by faith; and "where two or three are gathered together in his name, there is he in the midst of them." He assists our devotions; his own blessed spirit kindleth within us the flame of piety; he presents our prayers (as our Advocate, Mediator, and Intercessor) before the throne, the *very* mercy-seat of God the Father. He maketh us to be one mind, delighteth in the unity, and is grieved by the schisms (that is, the divisions) of the church. He loveth those who love one another. He resisteth the

proud, and giveth grace to the humble. He hath been in the flesh, and knoweth whereof we are made; and though "the just man may fall seven times," yet his Redeemer is mighty; his spirit shall support him in trouble, corroborate his weakness, and through perseverance, the just shall, ultimately, live by faith.

To the great Redeemer then let us turn our eyes. Though his spirit be felt in our hearts, "he sitteth at the right hand of God." Let us elevate our souls in devout aspiration, and "set our affection on things above, not on things on the earth." This is the test of sincerity laid down by the apostle,—"If ye then be risen with Christ, set your affection on things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God."—Let not that man assume the name of *Christian* who cleaves to the earth, grovels in impurity, wallows in vice, or spends his

life in scraping together splendid heaps of shining metal, or making provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof. The size of our barns, or the depth of our purses, will give no security to our souls, unless, from love to the Saviour, we feed the hungry and relieve the distressed. Wise or learned we may be; but the wisdom of this world profiteth only so far as it may be subsidiary towards making us wise unto salvation; and there is more true wisdom to be found in the Scriptures than in the writings of all the philosophers who ever set pen to paper. Give me leave, as we have been busied this day in examining a passage of Scripture with some degree of minuteness,—comparing spiritual things with spiritual, and interpreting the prophecies by the gospel,—to recite to you the opinion of one of the most learned and accomplished men that ever lived,—a pa-

triot, a lawyer, a linguist, a musician, a poet, a naturalist, skilled in history, and familiar with the transactions of the remotest ages, with the ancient and the modern oriental languages, both those in which the Scriptures of the Old Testament were written, and those used by the Rabbies of the Jewish Church, and by the Bramins and the sages of India;—I mean, the late Sir William Jones, who died in 1794, head of the Supreme Court of Judicature at Bengal.—I say, give me leave to recite to you his opinion of the Scriptures, written in a blank leaf of the Bible:

"I have regularly and attentively read these Holy Scriptures; and am of opinion that this volume, independent of its divine origin, contains more true sublimity, more exquisite beauty, more pure morality, more important history, and finer strains both of poetry and eloquence, than can be

collected from all other books in whatever age or language they may have been composed. The two parts of which the Scriptures consist, are connected by a chain of compositions, which bear no resemblance to any thing that can be produced from the stories of Grecian, Roman, or even Arabian learning; (he means the writings of the prophets.) The antiquity of these compositions no man doubts; and the unstrained application of them to events long subsequent to their publication, is a solid ground of belief, that they are genuine predictions, and consequently inspired."——Now, this Book discloses to us the glories of heaven; tells us that our souls shall never die; but that the fashion of this world passeth away, and that the sum of the number of its days is decreed; —when devastated by fire it shall vanish like the early dew of the morning:—and

then shall the Son of Man come, in like manner as the disciples once saw him go into heaven—*come, to judge us all.* These are truths of which we cannot doubt; but, if we believe them, let us live as men that expect their Lord; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

SERMON IX.

JOHN xix. 26, 27.

When Jesus, therefore, saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy Son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.

IN the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, his disciples beheld "God manifest in the flesh;" in him dwelt "all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;" but if he was "perfect God," he was also "perfect man." The reasonable soul, which quickened the human flesh in which he veiled the glories of his divine nature, was alive to the tenderest sensibilities of feeling. All those

charities, those preferences, those loving-kindnesses which adorn humanity, which meliorate it, and elevate it almost to the sphere of the Deity, ("I have said, Ye are gods,") resided in his bosom as in their proper mansion. We read in Scripture, in divers places, of *the sons of God;* but Jesus Christ has one peculiar title never ascribed to any other person, (neither can be, save to him who was predicted *the Seed of the Woman*, and to be *born of a virgin* mother,) and this title is—"*the only-begotten Son of God.*"—Yet, although thus of a nature equal to the Father—an equality he directly asserted, notwithstanding the offence it gave the infidel Jews, where he said, "*I and my Father are one*;"—although of a nature higher than the angels, whom he might otherwise esteem his "fellows,"—yet had he respect to her that bore him; yet did he feel for

the anguish which her relation to him occasioned; yet did he, by filial obedience, and filial affection, and pious care, try to take the point away from that sword which, in the spirit of prophecy, the just and devout Simeon declared should "pierce through her soul." In the midst of his sufferings, — nay, when they were now wound up to their highest pitch, — his heart was still in unison with the impulses of natural affection, and still vibrated with sympathy for his mother's woes. To procure her an asylum in her age—to provide her a soother in her agonizing sorrows—what does he?—he recommends her to the faithful custody of his selected friend St. John; who, humbly proud of the mark of distinction with which he had been honoured, calls himself, in the gospel which derives its title from his name, five times over, "the disciple whom Jesus loved."

If the mind of Christ bore the impressions of natural affection, it was not callous to the dint of *friendship*. Our Lord had friends; and those whom he had leagued to himself in the sacred band of amity, being chosen with a penetration from which nothing could be hid, on one hand received his inestimable favours, and on the other were true to their trust, and unshaken in friendly fidelity. He took a part in the grief of Martha and of Mary, when they numbered Lazarus with the dead; and mingled his tears for his friend, with those which they shed for their brother. And when the beloved disciple received his charge in the text, he did not falsify the confidence reposed in him;—from that sad hour he became a son to the childless mother—he took her unto his own home.

If it be not a crime to descend from feelings to which the consideration of actions

like these, improving our nature, must raise us, to take notice of the words of the text in a critical point of view, I would challenge the world of literature to produce a passage more beautiful, more simple, more concisely pathetic. The action became the Saviour of mankind;—the record is worthy of the Evangelist, a partner in it. The pure transaction is modestly narrated. So Christ, we cannot but cry out, must have done; so the Evangelist must have written. Here is Spartan brevity, and the modest simplicity of Sparta; but here is also a softness, a sweetness, a living benevolence in a heart now wrung by the cold hand of death, which Sparta never knew.—True friendship requires not the enumeration of every particular; true friendship demands not a repetition of requests; true friendship waits not for solicitation;—a word is sufficient; a look pleads eloquently with it;

a simple statement has the energy, in the congenial and allied mind, of the warmest persuasion. Our Lord's application to St. John purely rests on the most comprehensive generals,—"Behold thy mother!"—but the prompt interpretation of *the faithful friend* supplies all deficiencies; amplifies this conciseness; narrows not, by wilful misinterpretation, the scope of the appeal to his benevolence;—he proves, indeed, a son to the mourning mother, and from that hour of never-to-be-forgotten horrors, takes her unto his own home.

The vulgar can tell you, in the proverbs of the wise, that example sways *more* than precept; and yet some shallow finders of fault have urged the deficiency of gospel-teaching, because there is nothing said of friendship in it; and the gospel no where enjoins friendship as a duty.—In the first

place, it is by no means clear that friendship *ought* to have been so enjoined;—nay, I think we may safely say that it ought *not* to be insisted on as a gospel duty. Those things which are clearly in our power to perform, which do our own souls good, and are of use to mankind,—those things *ought* to be enjoined, and *are* enjoined, in the gospel. Many duties *akin* to friendship, many *including* it, many *going beyond* it, and extending its limits from the individual to all human-kind, are found in the New Testament. We are commanded to love one another,—nay, to love even our enemies, and not merely those who love us. We are to suffer no distinctions of religious tenets, no narrow bounds of party or of country, to circumscribe our benevolence or our beneficence; that is, our willingness to perform charitable offices, or the actual doing them.

The stranger—the dissenting Samaritan is set forth, in a mind-enlarging parable, to stimulate the bigotted Jews, and bigots of all countries and all ages, to succour the distressed, when the distressed want assistance, and come in their way. Duties like these, which doubtless must powerfully operate on the mind as preparatives for the harmonies and tendernesses of friendship, are enjoined us, and are plainly no less incumbent on us, than they are clearly in our power to perform. But friendship itself,—alas! it is not in every man's power to contract friendships. His lot may fall unto him among the heedless, the vain, the idle, the wicked, the selfish, the stony-hearted, where no seed of friendship can take root, or bring forth fruit. He may love the unthankful and the evil, in imitation of his God, who causeth his sun to rise, and his fertilizing showers to de-

scend on the inheritance of both;—but they who are at enmity with God, cannot have hearts fit to cement friendships with man. This is the converse of that proposition which affirms, that "he who loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen." All his offices of kindness shall be thrown away; all his advances of proffered affection shall be lost on the impracticable heart of sullen unthankfulness, which no coals of heavenly fire can melt, no confidential impartitions subdue. All his labour of love, which he may fondly bestow on the evil, will be fruitless; the milk of human kindness, which he gives him to drink, shall curdle within him; he will requite mischief for good-will; or turn insidiously and rend him who dreams of conciliating his friendship.—Whilst these insurmountable impediments may arise

between a man's inclination to contract friendships, and the forming of them *in wisdom*, and doubtless *in tenderness too*, no command to enter into them is to be found in the gospel; and they who would, on this ground, impeach the gospel, must expose either the wickedness of their hearts, or the weakness of their understandings. All that *could* be done, *has* been done by our divine Legislator;—he does not *command* us to strike leagues of friendship, but he *sets us examples* of it; and the gospel supposes its existence, and allows its commendable influence amongst men. Three friends of our Lord's we meet with at once, where it is written,—"Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." Three more we meet with, selected from the rest of the Twelve Apostles, (who were themselves selected from the rest of the disciples, and bound in stricter amity

with Jesus,) and made the witnesses of his transfiguration and the raising of Jaïrus's daughter, (one of them *the beloved disciple)* Peter, James, and John. Friendship always demands a similarity of mind, and an uniformity of ideas between the contracting parties. — Wheresoever Jesus discovered this kindred mind, he always felt that affection which is the basis of friendship. When a person, called by St. Matthew a young man, declared that he had kept the commandments from his earliest years, we read, that Jesus "beholding him, loved him." And whensoever he met with an humble mind, a teachable disposition, a faithful heart, his mercies of healing or instruction seem to have flowed with a double rapidity of bounty.

In his conversations he frequently alludes to the force of those friendships which he knew existed, and which he countenanced

by his own example amongst men. He allows the preference of friendship even where he would extend our courtesies beyond the circle of our friends, where he says, "If ye salute your *friends* only, what do ye more than others?" He marks the near relation in which men's friends stand to them, where he ranks them as *they* do, with those whom proximity of blood make dear to them, or an exalted condition a desirable connection; where he says, "Call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours," and where he likewise is employed in enlarging the orbit of benevolence.—Well knowing the weight of friendship's appeal, he introduces, on another occasion, a discourse, by saying, "Which of you shall have a *friend*, and shall go to him at midnight, and say to him, Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine on a jour-

ney is come unto me, and I have nothing to set before him?"—We may remark too, that our Lord, as an aggravating circumstance, says that, in the season of persecution, his disciples should be betrayed both by relations and *friends*. And, which gracefully finishes this edifice of precious texts, in giving his disciples an idea of the love wherewith he loved them, he says, "greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Here he seems to admit into the immeasurable and impassioned embrace of his friendship all mankind; for it was to redeem all the sinful inheritors of Adam's guilt that he shed his precious blood.

What our Saviour thus exemplifies, therefore, and allows, it becomes us not to regard with indifference. If, therefore, we have, or meet with, those mental attractions or affinities, which cause us to

coalesce with our brethren, and to be united with them in one body of friendship; let us not dread to indulge those natural inclinations. Man is by nature a gregarious animal; and surely the sweets of society must greatly corroborate the social tendencies of his nature.

Our great care must be to form those endearing connections with prudence, and in such a manner as to help us forward in the way that leadeth to eternal life, and to maintain us active and cheerful in it, and not to impede our progress towards that resting-place whither we travel.

First, We must choose for *friends* those whom we know to be *Christians:*—saith the Apostle, "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with

Belial? — Wherefore, come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord."

Secondly, We must choose for friends the pious, the virtuous, the good; and not those who hold the truth in unrighteousness. There can be no such thing as *true friendship*, either *with* the wicked, or *among* the wicked. *Combinations*, *conspiracies* there may be, but no friendship; and he who unwarily—(let the young and the inexperienced hear with both their ears,) he who unwarily commences a friendship with the wicked, shall soon become a confederate in their guilt, and a partaker in their sins.

Thirdly, As the dissolution of friendship gives positive pain, so we should do well to be assured of the fixedness and settled temper of those whom we may covet to call friends. The bands of unity which we twine with the fickle and giddy, shall prove

but ropes of sand:—and it is a piece of wholesome advice which one gives, who certainly has read mankind with no unlearned eye,—"Be not the fourth friend to him who has lost three before."

Fourthly, In order to preserve valuable friendships, and to keep them untainted with mischief, and make them profitable to our soul's health, as well as our temporal comfort; let no friendship for another man incline us to lose sight of, let no self-interest induce us to desire our friend to close his eyes to, the distinction between right and wrong. No plea of friendship can possibly justify a departure from righteous dealing.

Fifthly, Let us receive and give friendly admonition and reproof, with thankfulness in the former instance, with candour in the latter;—"Faithful (says Solomon) are the wounds of a friend."

To conclude:—I have reserved one passage of Scripture, recording an assurance of our Lord to his first followers, and I trust to us likewise, which gives the highest sanction to treaties of friendship; and that is, where he says, "*Ye are my friends* if ye do whatsoever I command you;—henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth,—but I have called you *friends;* for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you." Be it our chief care to obey the gospel, and to fulfil the commandments of Christ, that we may rise from the level of servants to the rank of friends to our Lord. He will never deceive those who place confidence in him; whilst the more we associate with him, and the closer we link our souls unto him, the more pure, the more holy, the more fit to abide the coming of our Judge, shall

we grow. He knows no fickleness; for, as it is written, he is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." He will not fail to watch over us with the solicitude of a friend, to support us with the aid of the Holy Spirit, and to reprove us with the still small voice of that monitor which he hath fixed in the breast of each of us. Let us walk after the example of the beloved disciple, making Christ's will our own; fulfilling all his mind; defending his religion against the attacks of its enemies, and comforting and raising up its friends, whensoever, through the weakness of an infirm nature, they chance to droop. St. John had the eminent honour to tend over the sorrows of the mother of his Lord. Be it our care to give the medicine of divine consolation to those that are broken in heart; to soften the pains of those who now go on their way weeping, and who,

with us, name with the cordialities of friendship the name of Christ, and gladly perform what he commands; for these are offices of similar if not of *equal* dignity with that assigned to the Evangelist,—"For," said Jesus, "whosoever shall do the will of my Father, which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."—Nay, more than this; we know that acts of benevolence exhibited to the least of those he calls his brethren, are esteemed as done unto himself.

May he accept us in these and all other things he hath ordained our duty to perform; not for our merits, but his own righteouness; not for our deservings, but according to the multitude of his mercies!

SERMON X.

Acts ii. 4.

They were all filled with the Holy Ghost.

This day the Church commemorates the descent of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles, which took place on the Day of Pentecost; whereby the promise made by Christ of the Comforter, and baptism by the Holy Ghost, was completed, and the gift of speaking divers languages was conferred on the apostles. Meditation on this visible interference and operation of the Holy Spirit gives us a fair opportunity to inquire into the nature and attributes of the Holy Ghost; being the third person in the Holy

Trinity, the more adequately we understand the former, the more perfect will be our idea of the latter. An accurate notion of the nature of God is of the utmost consequence in religion. If we worship an ideal being, we worship not the true God. We may feel much devotion in addressing or praising the object of our worship; but unless we have a rational and scriptural knowledge of the Deity, our devotion is but the zeal of ignorance, and the being which we adore is merely the creature of fancy and illusion. In the heathen world, those who admitted the existence of many gods, derogated from the honour of the *one* God; and those among them who acknowledged only the existence of *one* Supreme Being, and to the best of their understanding worshipped him, yet did nothing honourable or acceptable to the *true God*. The God of the Jews,—the God

of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,—the Lord of Hosts is his name,—the God, who by his word created the heavens and the earth, and by his Spirit dictated the Scriptures, which alone declare his nature,—is the *only true God*. From Holy Writ we learn that three Persons, in an unspeakable manner, are combined in one God. Co-equal, and co-eternal, these three Persons demand our adoration. In the name of this Trinity, according to the command of Christ himself, we are baptized; to wit—in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. This Trinity in Unity we invoke in the Litany—Three Persons and One God.—This is the God of Christians.

The Mahometans, who do not admit of the Trinity, worship neither the true God, nor the God of Christians. The Socinians and Arians, who disbelieve the Trinity, worship neither the true God, nor the God

of Christians. They worship a being of a supposititious nature,—of a nature which is not the nature of the true God; a Being, which is not the Lord Jehovah, but which is a creature of their own imaginations. We Christians "know what we worship;" we worship the Trinity in Unity and the Unity in Trinity,—and this with all faith, and all resignation of the will and understanding of man to the written word of God. We ask to know the nature of God only in the page of Holy Scripture, as the Holy Ghost gives us to comprehend it; trusting, that while we anchor in the sure ground of Scripture, we are no longer liable to be tossed to and fro, no longer exposed to be carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive.

Thus much I thought advisable to say on the Trinity in general: but as to the Holy

Spirit in particular, which is the principal business of the present moment, I have to prove, in the first place, the personality of the Holy Ghost. The adversaries allege, that Scripture means not, by this name, a Being distinct from the Father; but that it signifies only a quality, or the will, and the mind, and the power of God. But we shall shew that personal actions and feelings are ascribed to the Holy Ghost, in the same terms as to any distinct, and single, and independent person, in terms as clear and definite as are written of the Father and of the Son. We are exhorted, by the Apostle, not *to grieve the Spirit of God.* But grief is without doubt a personal affection, of which a mere quality is not capable.—Again, we are told that the same Spirit "maketh intercession for us, with groanings that cannot be uttered:"—now we can understand

what interceding persons are, but we cannot form any ideas of interceding or groaning qualities.—Again; the spirit "worketh all the spiritual gifts, dividing to every man severally as he will." Here we have voluntary operation, discretion, distribution, which, as strongly as words can, denote an individual person.—But the fullest proof of the personality of the Holy Ghost, we have in the description of the Comforter by Christ, gathered from the 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters of St. John's Gospel; the detached passages in which, relative to the matter in hand, I will connect and recite to you. "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall *teach* you all things; he shall *testify* of me; and ye also shall bear witness. If I go not away, the Comforter will not *come* unto you; but if I depart, I will *send him* unto you. And when he is

come he will *reprove* the world; and he will *guide* you into all truth; for he shall not *speak* of himself, but whatsoever he shall *hear*, that shall he *speak;* and he shall *shew* you things to come; he shall *glorify* me, for he shall *receive* of mine, and shall *shew* it unto you."——I hope there are many here who enter so far into the turn of the argument, as to anticipate me in the use I shall make of these words.—You observe the variety of personal actions here mentioned. You have a person *sent*, a person *teaching*, a person *testifying*, a person *coming*, a person *reproving*, a person *guiding*, a person *speaking*, a person *hearing*, a person *shewing*, a person *glorifying*, and a person *receiving*:—and this person one and the same,—to wit, the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost. It undeniably appears, therefore, that there is a person styled in Scripture the Holy Ghost; *and*,

that these personal attributes are not used *figuratively* of God the Father, expressing only the qualities and powers of the divine mind. I will further shew you that this divine person is distinguished from the person of the Father, by laying before you a passage or two wherein *that* is spoken of *him*, which *cannot* be spoken of the *Father*. It is written, "that the Spirit maketh intercession;"—now with whom maketh he intercession?—the answer is, with God. God, then, is the offended person, and the Spirit is the Intercessor or Advocate. Here is a distinction. If God be the Intercessor, with whom is he to intercede?—not with himself, because intercession implies three parties,—the offender, the offended, and the intercessor who mediates between the two former; so that if you take away the personality of the Holy Ghost, you involve the terms in obscurity, and make absurdity

of the language of revelation. This intercession, then, is an act which cannot be attributed to the Father; and, consequently, a distinction between the person of the Holy Ghost, and that of the Father, is evidently proved.—Again; I suppose the veriest Deist will allow that the Deity, called in Scripture the Father, cannot be sent of any one, but always sendeth; he will allow too, that the Son cannot be said to send the Father:—let then even the Deist attend to the evident distinction of persons between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, resulting from the passages which I am going to read once again to you.

"When the Comforter is come, whom *I will send unto you from* the Father, saith Christ;" and again, "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." When

therefore the Holy Ghost cometh to men, as sent by the Son from the Father, and sent by the Son himself, this personal action cannot be attributed to the Father only as working by the power within him: there is nothing of figurative expression here, because a figure involves the whole in confusion; but a clear and positive distinction of persons is set forth to the most reluctant mind, and the meanest understanding.

If, driven to the last resource of unwilling conviction, you are disposed to maintain that our Lord *does* speak figuratively here, mark the prodigious confusion which follows, both of person, action, and place; for then the meaning of this passage will be this:—"If the Father go not away, the Father will not come unto you; but if the Father depart, the Father will send the Father unto you. But receive this pas-

sage of Scripture with believing hearts, acknowledging the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and all is clear and proper. "If I (Christ) go not away, the Comforter (the Holy Ghost) will not come unto you; but if I depart (unto the Father, to wit, from whom Christ was to send the Comforter,) I will send him unto you."

In the thirteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, verse the second, it is written, that the Holy Ghost said,—"Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." Now, what says St. Paul, in the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, verse the fourth, as to the Divine Person who hath authority and power to give this solemn call?—"No man (says he) taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God." Now, as Scripture cannot possibly contradict itself, it follows, that whether it be said

the *Holy Ghost* calls, or whether it be said that they who are called, are called by *God*, the meaning is the same; the holy Penmen make no distinction between the two: the Holy Ghost in one instance, and God in the other, are terms perfectly synonimous; and, therefore, Scripture announces to us the Holy Ghost as very God. Agreeable to this is the language of our Lord, as recorded by St. Matthew, in the last verse of the ninth chapter; and that of St. Luke, in the fourth verse of the thirteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. In the former passage, Christ saith to his disciples,—"Pray, ye therefore, the *Lord of the harvest*, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest;" and in the latter, when the apostles Barnabas and Saul were actually sent, says St. Luke,—"They, being sent forth by the *Holy Ghost*, departed unto Seleucia." The Lord is

prayed to, that he would send forth labourers; and when the labourers are sent, it appears that it is the Holy Ghost that sends them; therefore it follows that the Holy Ghost is Lord; which plain conclusion is, in the same words, affirmed of the Holy Ghost in that formulary of the Catholic faith, which bears the name of the Athanasian Creed.

Take one more decisive proof of the divinity of the Holy Ghost, arising from comparing two texts of Scripture, which relate to the Power that inspired the Prophets and Evangelists. If we believe that there is a God, and that Scripture was composed under the influence and guidance of God, the passages of Scripture, which I shall now produce, will most undeniably prove that Holy Writ, if it be the suggestion of God himself, is no less the suggestion of the Holy Ghost. "All

Scripture (saith St. Paul) is given by inspiration of God." Now, St. Peter, speaking of the sure word of prophecy, says,—"The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." To be inspired by God, and to be moved by the Holy Ghost, are one and the self-same thing. The act of God, and the act of the Holy Ghost, produce equally the word of prophecy: they are both the direct and immediate authors of inspiration; that which is affirmed of one is also affirmed of the other;—and therefore the Holy Ghost is God.

I have thus proved to you, from the undeniable evidence of the letter of Scripture,—first, the Personality of the Holy Ghost; by which it is made evident that the Holy Ghost is *not a mere quality of the Deity;* which I have made *still more*

conclusive, by shewing you how Scripture affirms some things of the Holy Ghost, which cannot be affirmed, with consistency and propriety, of the person of the Father; and this naturally *warns us against confounding the persons* in the blessed Trinity. And then again, lest we should fall into the opposite error of *dividing the substance*, I have, in the third place, proved that the Holy Ghost, however distinguished in person, is nevertheless very God.

Throughout this discourse, I have honestly laid before you Scripture itself for every thing I have advanced. Any one that has the faculty of common sense can judge of the evidence, and also of the argument; for the matter is to shew you that the doctrine of the Personality of the Holy Ghost, and the doctrine of his proper Divinity, are really to be found in Scripture, and may be proved by it; and

when that is shewn you, your Preacher has done his duty. He has stated facts, and leaves you to decide. A man of humility, and, let me add, of faith, will never do more: he will never enter upon an explanation *how* these things are,—in what *manner* the Holy Ghost has a *personality* of *his own*, and yet is *one with God*;—Who is sufficient for these things? He will be content to search the Scriptures *whether these things be so*; and, finding them *there*, he will gladly receive them as truths: he will believe them as points of faith, and he will employ his reason—not in examining these points themselves, but in examining carefully the proof that they *are* points of faith; that they are *doctrines* contained in Scripture. These are the distinct provinces of faith and reason; the latter is coolly and narrowly to examine the witnessing of the Scriptures, and their

authenticity; how we know them to have been really dictated by God; and *then* to inquire into the doctrines contained in those Sacred Writings, either directly set forth, or gathered by fair induction and sound argumentation. When reason has performed its part, then faith steps in, and enters upon its peculiar office to believe whatsoever is found in Holy Writ, because it *is* therein found; to believe *that* to be a truth, which is found in the Word of God, because reason has already determined the Scripture to be indeed God's holy word. Faith receives the doctrine itself as the teaching, the injunction of heaven; and Reason determines that the *doctrine* is *the teaching of God*, being found in the Word of God. As long as faith and reason are properly employed, all will be clear and credible; but when once indiscrete men confound

them, and apply their reason to the doctrine, and their faith to the evidence, all is distrust, indistinction, darkness, and dismay.

We have been careful to pursue the right and the safe method in discoursing of the nature of the Holy Ghost: we have taken for granted, what from this place has been repeatedly proved, that the Scriptures are unquestionably of divine authority; and we have simply shewn you, that all which we have advanced is, *bona fide*, to be found in Holy Writ. Be careful, therefore, to give to the Holy Ghost the honour due unto his sacred name. Grieve him not; neither sin against him; neither blaspheme him. Ye have been baptized in *his* name, as well as in the name of the Father and of the Son: if you acknowledge the Father to be *God*, and call our dear Redeemer Jesus Christ, the Son of God, *Lord*, you must acknowledge the Holy

Ghost to be God and Lord also. St. John says, that *in the beginning*, that is, before the foundation of the world, from all eternity, the Word was with God, and was God, and the maker of all things; and in the first chapter of Genesis, which discloses to us the doctrine of the Trinity, we find the Holy Ghost existing then with the Father and the Word, which is the Son; for in the beginning, when the earth was without form, and void, when darkness was upon the face of the deep, then it was that the Spirit of God moved in the mysterious act of creation upon the face of the waters. Whether then we look to the inspiration of Scripture, to the name into which we are baptized, or to the great and awful act of creation itself, we find the Holy Ghost co-equal, and co-ordinate, and co-eternal with God the Father and God the Son. Let these reflections then elevate

our ideas of the reverence due to the Holy Ghost. But if we must *revere* him, as Christians, we have especial cause to *love* him also. He is our sanctifier, our guide into all truth, the author of all consolation, the giver of all grace; in him we are born again, and by him we are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus. Saith St. Paul to the Corinthians—"But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the *Spirit of our God*." By the Spirit we are joined unto Christ, and unto each other; "for by one spirit," saith the same apostle, "we are all baptized into one body." By the Spirit we are made the adopted sons of God; for saith St. Paul again, "we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but we have received the spirit of adoption whereby we cry *Abba*, Father; the Spirit itself bearing

witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." The Holy Ghost, (to conclude,) is the Comforter, the Paraclete, the Advocate, the Intercessor, which helps our infirmities, and pleadeth with Christ before God in our behalf; and therefore let us love him while we venerate him:— And may he dwell in our hearts, and purify them! May he fill our minds and exalt them! May we be sensible of his gracious influence, and obedient to it; that we may be Christians indeed, enjoying all the privileges which Christ purchased for us; that we may be guided by the Spirit in all things whilst we live here; and finally conducted, through Him who calleth and sanctifieth us, into the presence of God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. hereafter!

SERMON XI.

1 John iii. 4.

Whosoever committeth sin, transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law.

Before we enter upon an explanation of these words, it will be necessary to say something respecting the argument of the Apostle, which led him to use them.

St. John, who had been the beloved disciple of Christ, whilst his master continued upon earth, lived to experience the mortification of seeing a vast number of heresies rise up in his church.—It is supposed that he wrote this First Epistle about the year of our Lord 68. The incurable obstinacy and wickedness of the uncon-

verted Jews, had risen to an alarming height; and the Jewish Christians were in several respects tainted with the errors of their countrymen. We learn, from history, what the prevalent mistaken sentiments were, against which the Apostle argued. Some said that a mere external profession, a right faith only, and the privileges attaching on members of the true church, would justify them, and ensure their salvation, whatever their life and practice might be.—Simon Magus taught, that they who trusted in him needed not take any further care, but might live as they pleased. Others said, that actions are good or bad only according to the opinions of men. Others held that fornication, and the eating of that which was offered to idols, were indifferent things; and that to avoid persecution, it was lawful for Christians to dissemble their faith, to deny Christ, or to

join in idolatrous worship.—But St. John maintains, against these libertine and time-serving notions, that a correspondent purity is necessary in the lives of those who have taken upon them the profession of the gospel. That however men may call or suppose themselves Christians, they are still liable to commit sin; that sin and guilt are absolute, not mere relative or comparative terms; and that whosoever wilfully commits sin, forfeits the benefits of Christ's passion, who died, not to encourage, but to destroy the works of the devil.—"God (says he) is Light, and in him is no darkness at all:—if we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not speak the truth; but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." We are not to imagine (he

reasons) that barely joining ourselves to the true religion will render us pure and acceptable to God;—this is to deceive ourselves, and to make God tolerate sin. If we profess to believe in God, and would be esteemed members of Christ, we must put away from us, and renounce, the works of darkness which God abhorreth; we must die unto sin, live unto righteousness, imitate the communicable attributes of God, as exemplified in the life of Christ; and, as far as we are able, using all the means of grace, be "holy as he is holy, perfect as he is perfect." Thus, and thus only, shall the death of Christ profit us; for this is the only way of fulfilling the conditions of the Christian covenant. It is of the very essence of a covenant that there should be conditions annexed to it;—now the condition of the Christian obligation is such, that we manifest the soundness

of our faith by the purity of our works, that we demonstrate the fixedness of our hope in God, by patiently enduring even unto the end, and exerting ourselves to the utmost in bearing the burdens which he shall lay upon us; and that we shew the charity which fills our bosoms by being ready to give, glad to distribute; and, whilst we are awarding what justice dictates, ever listening to the plea of mercy. Thus shall our light shine both brilliantly and beneficially before men; and thus shall we act in the spirit of that brief summary of a Christian's duty, where it is written, "Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, is this—to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." We see, then, that a man is by no means in a state of salvation who is called a Christian, unless he abstaineth from sin:—sin

and Christianity are wholly incompatible with each other; for the latter is founded on the ruin of the former.

There are two sorts of men in the world, who still reason on the principles of the ancient heretics, against whom St. John argues in the Epistle containing the text: one of which holds that sin is merely a local idea; that is, that there is no such thing as sin at all; that it depends wholly on the usage of this or that country; and that what is here abhorred as a sin, is there sanctioned by the approbation and practice of all men. It is easy to see the tendency of an opinion like this. If there be no such thing as sin, then was there no occasion for the manifestation of the Son of God; yet Christians say that Christ is come in the flesh;—but sin being a thing merely ideal, his coming was needless, his laws are superfluous,—Christianity is but a

fable; and we (say they), who look with the penetrating eye of philosophy, can see through the whole delusion. These men are the hardy champions of the present day, in the cause of unrestrained liberty both of thought and action;—the partizans, I mean, of that outrageous species of liberty which knows no bounds; which mocks at the limits prescribed by reason, and disdains to enter the strait gate, or to tread the narrow path pointed out by revelation. They inundate the world with books; and profoundly shew us that we have scarcely a single virtue which has not been held of no value; and scarcely a single vice which has not been esteemed praise-worthy by some or other of the nations of the earth. By these means adultery, fornication, murder, both of a man's friend, and of himself,—in other words, duelling and suicide,—have been defended. The practices of the Maho-

metans have been set forth as models for Christians to follow; the opinions of the Chinese extolled as most wise; and Fakirs of the East preferred before the Fathers of the Christian Church.

But you will ask—When did we see such books? we have read no such treatises:—Yes, you have; and your wives and your children too;—and I will tell you how. These men know that this is not an age wherein the generality of us can bear to drudge through a stupendous folio; they know that the greater number read as much for amusement as for information;—and they act accordingly. They administer their poison in a vehicle of honey. They teach infidelity in a romance; confound the distinction between good and evil in relating an improbable tale; defend the most horrible sins in a novel, or give them almost the form of virtues by the imposing

garnish of dramatic artifice, and scenic decoration. Certain French academicians and indefatigable German wits, leagued together in the grand conspiracy, just unmasked against religion, morality, and social order itself, were the first who hit upon these ingenious modes of instilling their abominable doctrines; and greediness of gain has moved many of our own countrymen to give their labours an English dress, a portable form, and a fascinating aspect. And thus, through the deleterious activity of these deceived and deceiving men, our best principles are put in jeopardy, and we in danger of thinking as these tutors have instructed us, that virtue and vice are nothing but names; and that sin, in one quarter of the globe, is heroic virtue—is patriotic ardour—is holiness itself, in another.

Now, where shall we find a rule whereby to determine upon the actions of men, by the aid of which we may pronounce this to be a sinful, and that a virtuous action? *If there be no such rule*, our adversaries are in the right; and we shall do well to renounce the name of Christians, and to take that of infidels,—that is to say, of deists, of liberal men, or philosophers;—for this is the manner in which plain English is frittered away by the disciples of the new school. *But if there be such a rule*, then may the enemies of our faith be ashamed; but we must continue firm in our covenant with Christ. *St. John, in the text, affords this rule*:—"Sin is the transgression of the law."—"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth the law." Let us inquire what we are to understand by these words,—what law it is which the apostle means.—

Natural law, and divine law, we can recognize; the law which nature, without the aid of revelation, teaches; and the law set forth in the word of God. I will not reckon municipal law, because that is out of the question in the present argument; and, after all, it is only a branch springing from either the natural or divine law, or is a scion from one of these grafted upon the other. I believe that nature has prescribed far fewer laws, and those far less pure than some people are willing to allow. And till it can be proved that a corrupt tree can bring forth good fruit,—that thorns can bear grapes, or thistles produce figs,—I must always maintain that the natural law must be imperfect, both in the number and the excellence of its provisions. Many of the most boasted articles of the law of nature are pilfered from the law of God; and were they not miserably

disfigured by the stealer Man, might easily be recognized as the work of the Almighty. Upon the mind of Adam the will of God was written; and although many of Adam's descendants have asserted that those characters were inscribed by themselves, they who read human nature attentively can always detect the forgery, and render again unto God the things which are God's. But granting that nature is not in the least beholden to traditionary revelation, whether oral or written,—what does the opponent gain by this concession?—The difference of climate will ever cause its decrees to vary, and the natural law will always be of a motly complexion. There can be no general principles. Usage and accidental situation will determine every thing. Communities will prescribe laws adapted solely to themselves;—and the only similitude between the provisions of

different states, if I may be allowed the expression, will be that of no similarity at all. That is, the law of this country will be like the law of that in this respect, that neither of them will harmonize or tally with the law of any other. When we talk of the law of *nature*, we talk of a law which may embrace the *whole species* of man: but look at those nations who, not acknowledging the gospel, have created ideas of right and wrong unto themselves; and you will find them individually, and respectively, obeying the most discordant imaginable. There is, therefore, scarcely such a thing in the world as natural law; for a number of discrepant and contradictory opinions hardly deserve the name of *a law*, which always supposes something fixed, something regular, something uniform. The apostle, therefore, could not mean the *natural law*,

when, in the text, he said that sin is the transgression of the law; because what in one place is a transgression, is in another an observance of that law; and the gospel, of which the text is a part, is propounded, not exclusively to this or that country, but to every creature under heaven.—He meant, therefore, the divine law. Now, as the divine law, which is set forth in Holy Scripture, was not given at one time, but completed by degrees, and rendered more perfect at successive intervals; we must examine it, and see what parts of it are imposed finally, and what were merely temporary. The apostle says, "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ:" that it was useful to lead our steps to him who had all the fulness of divine knowledge. But the same apostle asks, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid, (he

answers); yea, we establish the law."—Now, as we must not interpret one text of Holy Writ so as to contradict another, how are we to reconcile the apostle to himself, whilst he argues in one place as if the law were merely temporary, and in another, as if its provisions still remain in force?—Why,—the answer is, that the divine law consists of two parts; one ceremonial, the other moral; one typical, the other substantial; one which Christ came to abolish, the other which he came to accomplish,—and of which he said, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled." The apostle, then, in the text, means that the *moral law* is that law which, whosoever transgresseth, sinneth.

Here, then, is that rule of which we spake; by which we may try our actions;

by which we may prove when we examine ourselves. All this prodigious learning about the locality of sin, which our philosophers display, is of no avail. They may ransack every corner of the world for customs to keep vice in countenance;—our actions are not to be estimated by the custom of any nation or community; they are to be regulated and measured by the word of God alone; by the canon of Christian morality; by the pure precepts of the gospel. The Mahometans may allow polygamy, and permit reiterated divorce; the ancients may have practised suicide; the Spartans may have commended private stealing;—what is all this to us?—the Scripture is our rule of faith and practice. The Sacred Writings contain a perfect law; they are able to convert the soul from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; they

give wisdom to the simple; they impart to the young man knowledge and discretion, and detain the feet of the aged in the path that leadeth unto everlasting life; they fix the wavering, confirm the doubting, and afford to all men an unerring standard of righteousness.—Morality is not so unsettled as our new revivers of old heresies would have us believe; it is not so changeable as to be one thing on the banks of the Ganges, and another on those of the Thames; it is still consistent with itself, because the word of God remains for ever one and the same. Good and evil—righteousness and sin—are definite and settled; they never become inverted, they never change situations; and however some may labour to confound them,—good and evil, virtue and vice, still must remain stubbornly fixed, and sufficiently obvious to any plain man who

chooses to employ the touch-stone of the Holy Scriptures.

One shallow man, the bolder for his shallowness, (nothing is so fearless as ignorance,) tells us that the Scriptures are not the word of God, and refers us to the works of the creation, as his only authentic word.—But where are we to look for instruction in righteousness, and moral direction, in the works of the creation? Will the orbits of the planets describe to us the circle of social duties? Will the eccentricities of comets explain to us the dreadful consequences of aberration from virtue? Will the attraction of the sensible regulate the affections of the intellectual world? Will the way in which plant lies wrapt up in plant, and seed within seed, teach us our duty towards the rising generation; or the opening of a flower how to educate our youth? Will the examination of the ani-

malcules that sport in a drop of water. "or the gay motes that people the sun-beam," instruct us how to distinguish between virtues and vices when they abut upon, or are nearly blended with each other; and to mark where the former cease, and where the latter begin? Then ought we to study the virtues through a telescope, and the differential characters of right and wrong by means of a magnifying glass;—then ought our way through human life, like the course of a vessel through the waves, or the ocean, to be determined by the polarity of a magnetized needle.—Shame on the man who, under the semblance of superior powers of thinking, could vent such puerilities! Shame on this age of reason that could read, without nauseating, such folly!

I mentioned *two* sorts of men who had revived old heresies; concerning one of which we have treated; namely, that which

vainly asserts, that actions are good or bad only in the opinions of men: And we proceed to expose the pernicious doctrine of the other, who would have us think that Christ hath made sin tolerable, and that it is sufficient to profess ourselves of the true Church in order to be saved;—that no man need be anxious about doing his duty; nay, that a Christian cannot sin if he would.—Extremes have often a strange resemblance to each other; and who would have expected to have seen the philosophers and the Antinomians labouring in the same harness together, and "drawing (as saith the Prophet) iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart-rope."

The philosophers argue without regarding Scripture. The Antinomians argue on Scripture erroneously interpreted; and the effect is the same. If we commit sin with-

out or with Scripture, still the law is transgressed. But he who sins, and at the same time acknowledges Scripture, commits the greater crime. For an enemy to despise Christ, is no more than might be expected;—but what shall we say of those who, acknowledging Christ, make him the minister of sin? Judas acknowledged Christ, when he said, "Hail, Master! and kissed him." The Antinomians affect to have the highest esteem for Christ; How is it, then, that they would crucify him afresh? how is it, that purporting to be his friends, they act as enemies would act? If we shall say unto Christ (using the Prophet's language), "What are these wounds in thine hands?" then he shall answer, "those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends."

What strong delusion induces these men to reason thus? It is the misunderstanding of such texts as these:—"Who shall lay

any thing to the charge of God's elect?"—"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin."—"Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not."—"The just shall live by faith."—"By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified."

Let us examine each of these alleged texts briefly.—"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" I answer, No man. But if any one commit sin, he is no longer one of God's elect; and then every Christian may charge him with being an apostate from God.—"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin:" True; but however you may suppose yourself born of God, if, by want of charity, by spiritual pride, by railing against your superiors, by speaking evil of dignities, by capriciously thwarting those wholesome ordinances of man to which the gospel enjoins pure submission, or any other way,

you transgress the law,—you commit sin;—and then, what saith the Scripture? "He that committeth sin is of the devil."—"Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not." True again; but say not, He who transgresseth the law doth not commit sin;—and unquestionably, whosoever transgresseth the law, abideth not in Christ.—"The just shall live by faith." Most certainly; but this doth not say that the unjust shall. Nay, by that very faith shall the sinner be judged; for Christ shall judge the world by the grand criterion of good and evil—the Gospel.—"By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified." If St. Paul mean here, as undoubtedly he doth, the ceremonial law, we agree with him; if you say he means the moral law, we shall reply, that a man cannot be justified who transgresses it;—and this is the law whereof St. James says, "That by works a man is

justified, and not by faith only." No, no; faith and Christian morality must go hand in hand; and he who goes about to take away both, or explode either, acts in direct opposition to the word of God, and the law of Christ. The philosopher who says there is nothing in morality, and the Antinomian who says that it is not necessary, each of them, by "breaking of the law, dishonours the enactor thereof. Let us be upon our guard against both of them. Let us make Scripture our sole guide, which will defeat the fallacious reasoning of them both. Why was Christ manifested? The verse following the text, saith, he "was manifested to take away our sins." Let us then beware of sin, lest we make the coming of Christ of none effect. Being once cleansed, shall we return to our iniquities? God forbid. In Christ is no sin; but if we transgress, we are no longer in him, and

shall lose our inheritance in the kingdom of heaven. Our state had been pitiable if, commanded to abstain from sin, we had posssessed no means of discriminating between moral good and evil. But God, through Jesus Christ, hath given us this sovereign rule in his Holy Scripture. Be it our care to hold fast the form of sound words which we have received, without being shaken from our purpose by either infidels or heretics. Whilst we have no confidence in the flesh, but wholly confide in the merits of Christ, let us keep innocency, and pursue the thing that is right, remembering, that without holiness no man shall see the Lord. And, to conclude, in the words of St. Paul,—"May the God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make us perfect to

do his will; working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SERMON XII.

GEN. xlii. 21.

And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother; in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear: therefore is this distress come upon us.

CONSIDERING the history of Joseph only in a critical light, it is one of the completest, best told, and simply-pathetic relations on record. Considering it as an act of Providence, tending to preserve the chosen seed, and to prove them, we cannot but admire the wonderful dispositions of Divine Wisdom, so apparent from the period of Joseph's artless youth, throughout his whole life. Beside the instruction

that a perusal of biblical histories of this nature conveys, the degree of pleasure that accompanies it is very great. These passages of Holy Writ, however replete they are with incident and character, are not mere creatures of the imagination, but true and authentic recitals of matters of fact. The history of Joseph and his brethren is but one of many interesting narrations to be found in the sacred pages. And it would prove a means of a real reform,—a reform of *manners* and *principles*, if these parts of Scripture, properly and judiciously selected, were put into the hands of young people, instead of those crude and flimsy productions of the present day, which tend very frequently to the nourishment of vice, and the corruption of youth.

However, I mean not at this time to expatiate upon the story before us, further

than where it relates to the text.—When the sons of Jacob were compelled to go down into Egypt to buy corn, Joseph presently recollected them, on their coming before him for that purpose. Dressed, probably, in his robes of state,—surrounded by his inferior officers, administering the affairs of Egypt, and second only to the king,—his ten brethren never recognised the youth whom they, twenty years before, had sold for a slave. Desirous to learn what intelligence he could about his father and the family, he enters upon a close examination of who they were; from whence, and upon what errand, they came. In the course of his questioning, he was rejoiced to hear that he had a brother still alive, in the land of Canaan, born of the same mother (Rachel) with himself. He immediately formed a design to have a sight of one so dear to him. To this purpose

he pretends to suspect their intentions, and disbelieve their assertions; and, after confining them for the space of three days, dismisses them with corn for their necessities, upon condition that one of them be left in bondage, till, in proof of their being true men, they bring to him their youngest brother. The ten knew very well how fond Jacob was of Benjamin; the last son of his beloved wife, who perished herself in giving him existence; the son of his right hand; the support of his old age; the brother of Joseph; whom he would not send with his brethren, "for he said, lest peradventure mischief befal him."

Reduced to the cruel necessity of leaving Simeon to perish in slavery, of confessing themselves spies, or of wounding the tenderest feelings of their grey-headed father,—in this anxiety and distress of mind, their envious and inhuman treat-

ment of their brother Joseph forcibly struck their memories. Their consciences took the alarm; knowing that they were obnoxious to the punishment of God, they concluded that his vengeance had overtaken them; and, self-condemned, "they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us."

Thus it was with the sons of Jacob, and thus it is with all mankind. Conscience will take the alarm, sooner or later. However its still small voice may be drowned by the hurry of business, or the tumult of pleasure, it will ever find a time to be heard at last. It is a monitor not to be overawed; it is a judge, not to be corrupted; it is a venerable witness, not to be out-faced; it is an examiner that trieth

the reins and the heart; an inquirer, not to be imposed upon; a chastiser, not the less to be dreaded because its punishment is given in private. No one can evade the cognizance of this principle, because it is a part of ourselves, and can no more be laid aside than we can lay aside our proper nature. The faculty of conscience is given us by God to preserve us in the paths of religion and virtue; or, by its reproofs, to bring us back when we have strayed from them. Nor is its power confined to the office of reproof; but it acts, likewise, the more pleasing part of an approver of our actions; conferring, in this latter capacity, no less happiness than it doth punishment in the former. The secret satisfaction of a man's own mind is no less productive of pleasure, than a wounded spirit, and a guilty heart, of misery; and if the first can prove a

support and comfort while we wander in the vale of adversity and tears, the second is able to throw a gloom and damp over us even while we revel in the brightest sunshine of prosperity. The influence of conscience is most extended and general. Situation and circumstance often preclude the exercise, or, at least, diminish the other powers of the human soul; but conscience controls the king upon his throne, and directs the conduct of the beggar at his gate. Yet, because some people may be ready to contest this point, I beg leave to enter more largely into it, and to examine and answer their probable objections.

Now, it may be said, that many persons, who lead notoriously wicked lives, do yet exhibit no marks of remorse, but live as if they had no such principle as conscience; unconcerned, and in the full practice of their iniquities.—In answer to this, we say,

that because their conscience is not offended, it is no reason why it never will become troublesome: however they brave it at present, it will not be ever thus.

Solomon, in his rehearsal of times and seasons, mentions "a time to keep silence and a time to speak." The present is the pause, and cessation, and silence of conscience; such a silence as precedes a thunder storm,—such a silence as is the dreadful prelude to an earthquake.

The time will come when conscience, of an *observer* shall become an *accuser;* it shall lift up its voice like a trumpet; shall cry aloud and spare not; shall shew them their transgressions, and set before them their sins; shall fill them with dismay, and cover them with confusion of face. Stay till sickness, or poverty, or any other stroke of providence overtakes them; and then mark how they shall shake with inward

tremblings; and prove to those who hesitated at their condition, that conscience was only dormant for a while, not extinguished for ever. We read not of any compunction that seized the ten brethren of Joseph, during all the twenty years that passed between their selling him to the Ishmaelites, and finding him in Egypt. It was not till they had suffered three days' imprisonment, and had been witnesses to the angry words of him whom they supposed to be a lord and prince of the country, and had seen their brother Simeon bound before their eyes, and heard the hard conditions propounded of his deliverance;—it was not till all this came upon them, that they said one to another—"We are verily *guilty* concerning our brother, and therefore is this distress come upon us."

If ever there was a man who might be supposed to have got above the reproofs of

conscience, to have possessed a mind hardened, and seared, and callous, and insensible to remorse, Judas Iscariot was he. This man had seen the mildness, the goodness of our Lord: had been entrusted by him; and carried the bag which contained the little treasure of the humble Jesus and his poor disciples: had eat of his bread;—had been thought worthy of an admission into the number of the highly-honoured Twelve; and was privy to a thousand circumstances that ought to have bound him to fidelity and gratitude beyond almost a possibility of the breach of either. Yet his unfeeling, unrelenting heart was proof against all this: he betrayed his Lord; he received the reward of his teachery—the thirty pieces of silver.—But even this man is an example of the force of conscience. The time came when it began to sting him. Our Lord was delivered up to

Pilate: then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the Chief Priests and Elders, saying, "I have sinned, in that I have betrayed innocent blood."

We have a similar case in the Jews, who, on St. Peter's preaching to them, as we read in the second chapter of the Acts, were smitten by their consciences for the concern they had had in the death of Christ. They had joined in all the clamour and outrages of their countrymen against him; were neither softened by the tortures he endured, nor awed by the stupendous miracles that accompanied his death. But the hour of their compunction was not yet come. The apostle addressed them in an earnest discourse, and concluded with these words;—"Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God

hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"—Happy was it for them that they exhibited such marks of remorse! By the advice of the apostle, they betook themselves to a hearty repentance; were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and the same day there were added to the church about three thousand souls.

From these instances it is very evident, that as it is not a necessary consequence, that an accusing conscience should be the immediate effect of sin; so, the objection that the influence of conscience is not so general, because many notorious sinners are not chastised by it, falls to the ground; since this is no reason why, at a future and no

very distant period, they may not feel its severest lashes.—But again; it may be urged that some men have even died without feeling any of those upbraidings or misgivings of mind, or undergoing any of the horrors of self-condemnation. Of those, concerning whom it hath been affirmed that they have thus died, the number is very few: and of that few, who will take upon them to say that they have not experienced any anguish of mind? for though the bystanders do not observe it, it by no means follows that it doth not take place. When any thing hangs upon the mind, its disquietude is much increased, when it is not permitted it to impart its sorrows. And when the uneasiness of an offended conscience is cloked on a death-bed, the torture is much more intolerable. But because the partisans of infidelity have made much-ado about the deaths of two or three men,

who have died, in our days, as if they were void of all sorrow, and had not the least misgiving of mind,—it will be proper to inquire into this point more carefully, and to examine whether there may not be some very powerful passion in the mind, which, although it cannot entirely sheath the stings of conscience, yet is able to inspire men with a degree of fortitude sufficient to conceal their feelings from those about them. Now these men were of the number of those whom some have stiled philosophers, some deists, some atheists. At least, the fact is certain, that both in their conversations and writings, they took infinite pains to loosen the ties of religion, to run down the idea of God's providence, to decry the belief of a future state, and particularly to deride the notion of revealed religion, and to lessen the value of Christ's blood, and the life and immortality which

his gospel brought to light. In this *glorious* warfare they passed their lives; and certainly displayed a consummate address and ingenuity, equal to the establishment of any thing but palpable *falsehood*.

Now as they sought for fame amongst mankind by these achievements, like their great types in the Old Testament, who in order to make themselves a name, set about the building of Babel,—who does not see that, by betraying symptoms of fear at the approach of death, they must inevitably have subverted the monument which it was the business of their lives to erect? We need not scruple to ascribe their seeming composure to a dread of shame, the ruling and master-passion of vain-glorious men. They knew not how to encounter the scoffs and ridicule of those about them: if they should seem to faulter in their last moments—it was but one desperate plunge

more, to secure (as they reckoned) their reputation—and they made it.

There have been instances of those who have endured even the rack, and have died rather than be compelled to betray their associates. If those were able to endure so much for the sake of others, these may easily be acknowledged to have stifled the suggestions of conscience for their own sakes. It is clearly in the power of resolute minds to conceal their pangs; but we are by no means to conclude that those pangs of conscience do not exist, because we do not perceive them.—God forbid that any of us should make the experiment; but we may depend upon it that, however we may contrive to push reflection aside during the hours of health and dissipation, it will command an audience at the hour of death; and as we have lived—obeying or violating the laws of Christ—will begin that

misery, or that happiness in us here, which will continue to all eternity. God has given us this principle of conscience, as a guide and a judge. The voice of conscience is the voice of God; and the sentence of the Almighty, at the Judgment-seat of Christ, will most assuredly confirm its decrees.

I have thus taken occasion, from the rebuke of the consciences of Joseph's brethren expressed in the text, to speak in general concerning the power of conscience;—to prove, that though it may be perhaps evaded for a time, yet, on some occasion or other, at least in the hour of death, it will overtake us. I shall conclude with offering you one plain rule, which, if attentively observed, and manfully abided by, will go far to preserve us at peace with ourselves and with our God. It is this:—"*Always to obey the first*

suggestions of Conscience."—The difference between good and evil, to a plain, unbiassed, serious, and religious understanding, is very evident. In every undertaking, every action, every thought, therefore, our conscience is always able to decide without a casuist. When we halt between two opinions, we must not deceive ourselves with the notion of its being difficult to determine which to pursue: Conscience is not an ambi-dextrous advocate that will plead on either side of the question, or on both sides; and, therefore, there is but one of the opinions that a conscientious man can follow; the other is the cause, not of conscience, but of some favourite passion or prejudice. We shall do well to take the advice of conscience in time, and at once; for we are prepossessed, and therefore must not deliberate, for there is danger in such deliberation. In all

doubts that may arise concerning the relative importance of mercy and sacrifice; faith and morality; justice and charity; concerning the limits of liberality and profuseness; frugality and parsimony; resolution and obstinacy; good nature and weakness; compliance and timidity; or any other of the ordinary points where conscience takes cognizance of the case; we may safely trust to its first whispers, and confide in that judge which God has planted in us. What gratitude is due to the Almighty for this internal director! so at hand; so wakeful; so sincere; so intelligible! But the best way of expressing our gratitude will be to make that use of this monitor for which our Creator formed it; and herein continually to exercise ourselves—"to have a conscience void of offence both toward God and man."

SERMON XIII.

JOHN xii. 35.

Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the Light, lest darkness come upon you.

HE who attentively reads the New Testament, will have abundant cause to wonder at the unaccountable obstinacy and infatuation of the Jews, who were not to be convinced of the truth of our Saviour's divine mission, either by the fulfilling of prophecies, the miracles of Christ, or the arguments of his apostles. And yet it is a fact, that from the æra of Moses, the Jews ardently expected that *fulness of time* when a Redeemer was to appear in Israel.

Daniel the prophet actually foretold the very period when his ministry was to commence; and the other prophets disclosed so many particulars relating to his office and person, that, one would think, no one who candidly compared them with the character and conduct of Jesus Christ, could possibly entertain a doubt about his being the promised Messiah, the anointed of God. But notwithstanding this, when our Lord appeared upon earth, although he superadded to the accomplishment of prophecies the divine faculty of working miracles, the Jews shrunk from conviction, shut their eyes and stopped their ears against the admission of the truth, and remained unsubdued with an invincible and almost incredible hardness of heart. Our blessed Saviour frequently lamented this hatred of the light. His compassion outweighed his anger at their refusal of

him, not willing that any should perish, but that, repenting and believing on him, they might have everlasting life.

After experiencing the extreme obstinacy of the Jews, we find him, on a sight of Jerusalem, humanely deploring their wilful blindness, and their loss of those precious moments in which they might have secured their salvation:—"And when he was come near he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in *this thy day*, the things which belong unto thy peace—but now are they hid from thine eyes!" In the words of the text he exhorts them to lay hold upon the means of conversion while they were yet allowed them; before his death, and return into heaven, closed the prospect of mercy, and left their stubbornness to the darkness of despair. "Yet a little while is the light with you; walk while ye

have the light, lest darkness come upon you." There is yet a little time allowed you, wherein the light of truth will still be offered you: and it is not even now too late to embrace it, if you will lay aside your unreasonable prejudices, before God removes from you the means of knowledge, and you be wholly given up to your own errors, and left to wander in the darkness of ignorance, superstition, and incurable prepossessions, exposed to those evils which will inevitably follow upon the rejection of me and my instructions.

But in vain the admonition of our Lord; their prejudices seemed to increase by the very means used to remove them. We know what lengths their prejudices carried them; their horrible imprecation will never be forgotten—"His blood be upon us and upon our children." Those obstinate men were miserably destroyed, and their posterity

are become a standing—a perpetual monument of the wrath of God upon those who reject his proffered salvation.

Thus reading of the sacred volumes, and thus reflecting, the zealous Christian is lost in astonishment at the infatuation of the Jews; and he is almost tempted, in the heat of his affection for the Christian cause, to execrate their conduct, and to bury his pity in imprecations of wrath. But, let us check our intemperate zeal;—my brethren, while we condemn the Jews, we pass sentence upon ourselves. The same gospel is preached to us; the same Redeemer is held out to us; the same promises are made to us; we are dissuaded from a continuance in sin by the same threatenings:—And what is our conduct? Do we accept the terms of the gospel? or do we remain still the servants of sin? Do we indeed become disciples of Christ; or,

like the Jews, who looked for the splendour of a conqueror in the Messiah, prefer the vain shew of an empty world, to the self-denying exercise of religion?—I will proceed still further in the parallel. The Jews were encouraged to embrace Christianity by the display of miracles, and by many wonderful transactions, addressing their passions through the inlet of reason.—And surely, if we do not absolutely turn away from the manifestation of the power of God, we have many speaking instances of his providence which ought to be listened to, which ought to command our attention. Let any one but look into himself, and remember the past transactions of his life; let him remember how he was preserved in his childhood, how guarded in his youth, how defended from sicknesses, from accidents, from the wiles, the envy, the treachery and malice of others, and

from the effects of his own passions; and he will style that power, at the least, miraculous, which shielded him then, and still protects him. The Jews were a peculiar people, set apart by the Almighty, and taught a pure religion: but the religion of Christ is a purer religion than that of Moses; and if our lives are not of a correspondent perfection, our case will be worse than theirs. Do you think that the Son of God taught a new religion, and cemented the new covenant with his blood, only to furnish us with matter of speculation or comparison; only to afford us a theme of declamation, a subject to dispute about, or only to clear up a small number of curious and metaphysical difficulties?—By no means. He died that we might be heirs of the kingdom of heaven, joint-heirs with himself; if so be that looking unto Jesus, we tread in his steps, are seek-

ing to be holy as he is holy, and are indeed (what as Christians we purport to be) a peculiar people zealous of good works.

Those who are truly followers of Christ, and have imbibed a portion of his spirit, will not confine Christianity to matters of opinion, but will extend it to the practice of religious and moral duties. The enormity of guilt is always increased in proportion to the means afforded of excelling in uprightness. Had we never known a better rule than that of mere nature by which to regulate our lives, we should have been free from the crime of breaking precepts, in that case, never made known unto us. Having received but one talent, the improvement of ten would not have been expected from us. Living without law, we should have been judged without that law. But such is our state, that we can have no excuse on the ground of ignorance. The

gospel is every where preached among us, in all its primitive simplicity; undeformed by the follies of popery; unclouded by the phantasies of worldly wisdom.

The present age is called an enlightened age:—let us be careful lest that be applied to us, which our Lord spake to the Pharisees of old;—"If ye were blind, ye should have no sin; but now ye say—*we see*, therefore your sin remaineth."

The Jews were long suffered to continue unpunished by God, to the end that "a great door, and effectual," might be opened to them, for their conversion at the last. "Many a time they provoked God to anger, and grieved him" with their idolatries and perverseness. His goodness was not impaired: he sent his servants, the prophets, to reclaim them. They regarded not his prophets.—Last of all he sent his Son: but, like the disobedient husbandmen

in the parable, they completed their crimes, and the full measure of their guilt, by crucifying the Lord of Life.—The case is the same with the sinner of the present day. He is still spared by the divine mercy; and permitted to live with the aid of every method that may serve to awaken a remorse of conscience, and convert his soul, without depriving him of *free-will*, the first principle and prerogative of a moral agent, without the exercise of which he cannot be justly held accountable for his actions, or deemed by Almighty God an object either of reward or punishment. He hears the voice of God in the language of Scripture; and his holy prophets, though dead, yet speak in their writings, which God's providence hath preserved. But the sinner still continues (as it is written) to crucify the Son of God afresh, and to put him to an open shame. The

spirit of God will not always strive with man. There is a certain term appointed, beyond which, if repentance be deferred, the door of mercy will be shut against him, and he must lament, in anguish and outer darkness, the loss of God's favour and acceptance. While life remains, and his faculties are permitted to him, every man, (such is the grace of God, "who will have all to be saved,") is invited to lay hold upon salvation. When a short life is closed, (and how short is even the longest!) he has no more a choice,—but the evil which he preferred when alive still pursues him, haunts his polluted soul, and presents him a victim to the offended jnstice of heaven. If it be certain that only in this life we can have an opportunity to prepare for heaven, it is plainly our truest interest to employ this life accordingly. Scripture no where speaks of another state of trial.

There is no other world where we can again live over a past life, and repair former crimes by a new course of virtue. The miserable wretch, who upon earth had never obeyed nor known Christ, would gladly enter upon such a renewed state of preparation. But it is not permitted. Beyond the grave lie but two ways,—*this* the road to happiness, *that* to misery. The confidence which an approving conscience inspires, leads the religious along the former; the stings of guilt drive the wicked along the latter.

Let us pause a moment, and consider that great day continually approaching, when all the quick and the dead shall be summoned before the Judgment-seat of Christ. All must obey the call.—"There is no darkness nor shadow of death where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves." Their "sin shall find

the wicked out," whithersoever they shall retreat; and drag them, exposed and trembling, before the face of God, angels, and men.—What then will be their thoughts!—"Unhappy men that we are, what infatuation possessed us when upon earth! We enjoyed every means of grace, and heard a thousand times the fate of sin foretold. We were admonished of the brevity of life,—we saw it daily exemplified—we were warned against deferring of repentance. We were allured by the promises, and threatened by the denunciations of the gospel. To us was made known the unsearchable riches of Christ. To us were those doctrines taught which are according to godliness. To us the full and free salvation of the glorious gospel was announced; but we refused to hear it. We gave no heed to religion; in the world we quenched its divine light in an ocean of impiety, and

now we are reserved to the blackness of darkness for ever!" Those who lead thoughtless lives, obeying the dictates of youth and gaiety,—those who are deeply immersed in the business of the world,—cannot, without an effort, call home their attention so as to fix it upon a point of time so unpleasant to anticipate, and seemingly so distant as this. But whether they make it an object or no, time silently passes onward; and the great day of the Lord, however possibly distant, still approaches. If we would escape the horrors of that day, we must be wise betimes. "We must walk while we have the light, lest darkness come upon us."

He who bears in mind a continual recollection of the shortness of human life, will hardly fail of employing that life as he ought. But how unwilling are we to be taught this truth! Spectacles of

mortality are almost every day seen, yet the frequency works not the effect which might be expected. To one, however, who thinks aright, the grave affords a lesson more affecting than all that human eloquence can produce. He regards the death of a fellow-creature as an admonition of God; and the departure of another teaches him to prepare for his own. Happy would it be for mankind if all were thus open to instruction; but the generality have another train of ideas which are awakened on these occasions. With them the subject of contemplation is not the death of another, but their own continuance in life, together with a kind of self-felicitating comparison of their condition with his. The death of any one is often, as it were, a signal of censoriousness for those who knew him. All his character is dissected; every failing

malignantly dwelt upon; his property scrutinized, and his method of gaining it commented upon. His alliances and connections are inquired into. Idle curiosity searches into the minutest facts, not to profit by the discovery, but only invidiously to make it.—Are not these things so?—But surely they ought not so to be; and other things ought to employ our attention, and other motives to give it birth.

Perhaps nothing has more engaged the attention of the thinking part of the world than the discovery of some mode of disarming death of its terrors. This has been attempted several ways. Some visionary projectors have even endeavoured to discover an universal remedy for all diseases, hoping to put off all fear by extinguishing the possibilty of dying. This discovery has made an equal advance with those other instances of human folly and human pre-

sumption—the search after the philosopher's stone, and the invention of a perpetual motion; and while the sages have been busied about preparing their grand elixir, death has rendered their schemes abortive, and has compelled them to become unwilling instances of the truth of Scripture, where it says, "It is appointed unto all men once to die." Others have attempted to persuade themselves, that death is only a peaceful period of a wearied being,—an eternal sleep;—that all existence closes with the eyes in the moment of dissolution, and man is resolved into dust, unconscious and incapable either of pain or pleasure after his decease. A singular conclusion, by which reason is suborned to give evidence on the side of irrationality; by which a thinking and reasoning being argues itself into the condition of the "beasts that perish;" by which the arrogance of shallow

understanding contradicts the united evidence of Scripture, of the wisest and best men; offers violence to our natural feelings, and abashes our best hopes—the hopes of immortality.

Thus have men attempted to argue; but have they argued to conviction?—By no means; the approach of death has shaken their impotent resolves:—Certainty was out of their reach; and doubt causes the heart to sink, as well as despair. Thus, they that would be reckoned intrepid philosophers, have died like one of the people.—Others again have boldly endeavoured to throw off all thought of death; have attempted to still their apprehensions by fresh draughts of pleasure, and to change the fears of parting with life for a resolution of enjoying it. But this is the most extravagant effort, and the least to the purpose of any: it may drown reflection during the

hours of health,—but it will always be deficient in the article of death. The sweetest music will sound harsh in a dying ear; and the soul can have no relish for pleasure when the body is sick unto death. And this has been, and will always be, the end of such endeavours,—that all this shew of banishing the fear of death has ended in rank cowardice. And indeed it cannot be otherwise:—to intoxicate is not the way to strengthen the mind; and a course of voluptuousness tends more than any thing else to weaken and unnerve it.

What erring, and yet what opinionated creatures are we, when deprived of the light of revelation! How hasty to exercise our reasoning faculty—how prone to misuse it! Man, left to natural illumination, builds a superstructure of pride upon a foundation of ignorance; loses sight of God, esteems himself the cause of his own existence,

accountable to none but himself; nor is he rightly informed of his own condition, but by the great Instructor—Death!—Miserable reflection!—that he is then but beginning to learn, when his knowledge can be of no use; that light is just breaking upon his mind, when darkness comes upon him!

The true mode of taking the sting from death, is making a proper use of life; and the way to die happily, is to live righteously, soberly, and godly, and to be constant in the use of all God's sanctifying ordinances, and to exercise faith in our Redeemer's perfect and atoning sacrifice. If our desire is to be with Christ, and to rejoin those who have been dear to us in his presence, we must exemplify his life in ours. The righteous, and the righteous only, hath hope in his death. The life of a Christian is a blessing to others and himself; it

makes happy the lives of his fellow-creatures, and renders his own death enviable. Every action of a true Christian tends to prepare him for the hour of his dissolution, and the presence of God his Saviour. Such an one need not fear to die; his soul is already assimilated to the divine mind; and the merits of Jesus Christ, imputed to him by the free grace of God, will unquestionably ensure him an endless felicity.

Let us then listen to the invitations of the gospel; and "while it is called to-day," let us embrace them before the night cometh wherein no man can work. If God spared not his own people who regarded not his call, neither will he spare us: "yet a little while the light is with us." 'Tis true, life is short; but men make it still shorter by bestowing it upon trifles. Blind to their real interest, they squander it away upon splendid vanities, and make

themselves that brevity they complain of. Yield but up to the concerns of religion, and to preparation for eternity, a moderate share of the time lavished upon things of no moment, and the little limits of life will suffice to work out the salvation of your souls; the darkness of death shall be only a momentary obscurity, a short passage into the realms of everlasting day, where the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of God their Father.

SERMON XIV.

1 John ii. 22.

He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

It was foretold, by Jesus Christ, that false prophets and deceivers should arise in his Church; and several of the apostles allude to his prediction, particularly St. Paul, St. Peter, St. Jude, and St. John, the beloved disciple. In all ages of the church, there had been patrons, preachers, and partizans of error. The Patriarchal and the Mosaic dispensations had been thus annoyed; neither was the religion of Christ to be exempt from adversaries. "There were false prophets also among the people,

(saith the apostle) even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction; and many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." These are the words of St. Peter.—St. Jude describes these men as "denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." St. Paul speaks of "that man of sin, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped:" and St. John calls the same person antichrist, that is, the opposer of Christ; and says, "it is the last time; and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists, whereby we know it is the last time."—"These last days," and

"these last times," and "the last time," are expressions which mean the æra of Christianity, the last impartition of the will of God to man, the ultimatum of revelation;—and St. John concludes that the final dispensation has taken place, because those very opposers had appeared, of whom the spirit of prophecy had spoken. So that the man of sin, the son of perdition, called also antichrist, and all his disciples and coadjutors, nurtured "in philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ, in whom dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily," proved, by their predicted opposition, that the gospel kingdom had commenced, and that the revelation, by Jesus Christ, was of divine origin. Such is the general result of the "oppositions of science falsely so called."

That Man of Sin—the Son of Perdition—and the Antichrist,—these names seem to point at some individual person; some grand deceiver of mankind; some eminent adversary of Christianity, who should rise up in his day, "after the working of Satan, with all power and signs, and lying wonders, and with all the deceivableness of unrighteousness." In almost every age of the Church, they have been ascribed to some flaming persecutor, or some daring apostate, or some successful deluder, who has persuaded his followers to "believe a lie." Domitian, Julian, Mahomet, and others, have each been called the Antichrist; as has the Pope, the notorious fabricator of false miracles, and first mover of "the mystery of iniquity." As, however, this name has been given to many individuals, it is not certain that it has, as yet, been given to the actual person intended by

Divine Providence; and, therefore, instead of endeavouring to fix it upon any one, I shall, in a more humble, and, I think, a more charitable way, take upon me simply to point out one unquestionable tenet of the Antichrist, which may serve to nullify his artifices, whether he has appeared upon earth in the days of our fathers, is contemporary with ourselves, or is yet to "be revealed."

The appellation of the Antichrist occurs in four texts;—three of them in the First, and the fourth in the Second Epistle of St. John. We find the first of these texts in the same chapter where we read the words of the text; I have quoted it already:—it merely informs those, to whom the epistle was addressed, that as they had heard that Antichrist should come, there were even then many antichrists. "They went out from us," adds the

apostle; whence it should seem that the antichristian spirit originated with the primitive converts themselves; and hence we may gather, that false doctrine and heresy are marks by which it may be known. But the next verse, in which the name of Antichrist occurs, (which is the text,) gives a decided character to the nature of the error which he maintains, and endeavours to propagate. "He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son." These words furnish us with one unquestionable tenet of the Antichrist;—namely, the denying the relation subsisting between God and his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ. Upon this doctrine, peculiar to revealed religion, the whole of Christianity rests. If Jesus Christ were less than the Son of God, the offering of himself for the sins of the whole world were an insufficient sacrifice, and mankind

were yet in their sins; and, therefore, to deny the sonship of Jesus Christ, is in effect to deny the whole tenor of the gospel; is to deny the efficacy of the death, and the utility of the very office of Christ; is to oppose all that he taught, to count as a thing of nought what he suffered; is to be Antichrist, therefore, in the strongest sense of the word.

The third place, where the term Antichrist appears, is in the fourth chapter of the First of John; and where it immediately refers to the incarnation of the Saviour of the world. "Hereby know ye the spirit of God:—every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God; and this is that spirit of Antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now already is it

in the world." The ancient heretics taught that Jesus was not born Christ, but that Christ, or the Word, descended upon Jesus, the Man, at his baptism, and again left him at his death; for that Christ was incapable of suffering, and that only the man Jesus died. This is to reduce the office of Messiah to a mere phantom, and to degrade the Son of God to a level with the sons of Adam, and consequently to render nugatory the doctrine of Atonement, upon which is built the whole structure of Christianity. Jesus Christ was born the Saviour of mankind: there is nothing in Scripture which either proves or alludes to his temporary investiture with the office of Messiah. The Spirit of God, indeed, descended upon him at his baptism, and an audible voice from heaven announced him the beloved Son of God; but this was merely to identify the Saviour to the

Baptist and the people;—for John bore testimony to this effect:—"I knew him not; but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost: and I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God." And beside this, we must recollect, that, previously to Christ's taking our nature upon him, the Scriptures inform us his incarnation was his own act and deed. "When he cometh into the world, (saith the Epistle to the Hebrews,) he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure; then, said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God." The sacrifices under the Law were but figures of the

true—the great sacrifice once offered, when the only-begotten Son of God "laid down his life for us, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God." And St. Paul tells us, "that being in the form of God, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." And, moreover, when the angels announced to the shepherds the birth of Christ, they said, "Unto you is born this day in the City of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord;" so that the antichristian notion that Jesus was not the Son of God, but that he was a mere man invested for a time with the office of Messiah, is wholly unfounded, and rests upon no warranty of

Scripture whatever: for the Scriptures represent him, whilst yet in his pre-existent state of glory, as determining to come upon earth, and as born, and dying the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. Indeed, we may say that Christ died a martyr to this doctrine; for the imputed blasphemy, for which sentence of death was passed upon him, was his avowal that he was the Son of God;—for, saith St. Mark, "the High Priest asked him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? and Jesus said, I am; and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the High Priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy; what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death." Hence we may gather, that they who deny that Jesus was the Son

of God, not only hold the doctrine of Antichrist, but agree with the High Priest and his abettors, who judged him guilty of blasphemy, and condemned him to death. The fourth passage wherein the word Antichrist occurs, is in the seventh verse of the Second Epistle of John: — it states, that "many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an Antichrist. Look to yourselves (the apostle adds), that we lose not those things that we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."

It seems essential to the integrity and the purity of the Christian faith, that we acknowledge Jesus Christ to be the Son

of God, (the only-begotten Son of God, St. John styles him,) and believe in the Father and the Son; otherwise it does not appear that we can have any interest in the redemption procured for believers by the death of Christ. "This is the record, (saith the apostle,) that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." If "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin," it is because he was "the Son of God." A stedfast belief in this great truth procures for us the aid and the in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit. "We have seen and do testify, (saith St. John,) that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God."

Now, what "part or lot," in the salvation which is by Jesus Christ, can he have who denieth both Father and Son; who will not believe "the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son?" Such a one is a disciple of Antichrist, a proud maintainer of opinions directly opposite to the doctrine and the gospel of Christ. Such a one cannot be deemed a Member of the Church; "for, (said the beloved disciple,) our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ."

St. John, who died in extreme old age, observed the rise of many heresies in the Church. "When the wheat grew up, then grew up the tares with it;" but nothing seems to have affected his mind more sensibly, than the denial that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. He may be called *the Apostle of the Catholic Faith.* He begins his gospel with asserting that

"the Word was with God, and was God," and that "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst" men, who "beheld his glory, (the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." He expressed himself thus in his gospel; and in his epistles he adheres to the same doctrine. "He is Antichrist, (says St. John, in the text,) that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father. Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye shall also continue in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life. These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you."

One of the Christian Fathers, who had been a disciple of St. John, related a story

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of him, preserved by Irenœus, that such was the apostle's abhorrence of heresy and heretics, that, having entered a bath where he saw Cerinthus, (a chief maintainer of the antichristian doctrine, and against whose principles he particularly wrote,) he leapt out of the bath without stopping to bathe, saying, that he feared the very edifice would fall upon the head of that enemy of the truth. I can easily conceive that St. John acted in this very manner. He was no respecter of persons. He would never compromise the cause of orthodoxy. Consistent with his conduct respecting Cerinthus, is his direction to the elect lady, in his Second Epistle; not to exhibit so much as the rights of hospitality to one who held the antichristian doctrine, nor to greet him. "He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son,—(hath fel-

lowship with them; that is, dwelling in them and they in him): if there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds." How far is this from the mawkishness of that indifference about the truth as it is in Jesus, which is called liberality in these our days! Very different, indeed, is the decisive tone assumed by the apostles with regard to infidels and heretics. "I beseech you, (says the apostle to the Romans) mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them." To the Corinthians, he says,—"If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema, maranatha;" in other words, excommunicated. To the Galatians, he writes,—"Though we, or an angel from

heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed;" let him incur the heaviest censure of the Church. And he charges Titus—who exercised the episcopal authority in the island of Crete,—"A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject."

I have been careful, in pointing out to you one unquestionable tenet of antichrist, to shew you scriptural authority for every thing I have laid down;—and, lest you should think my zeal may have carried me too far, and lest you should deem my language too strong in reprobating the antichristian spirit of those who would degrade the Son of God into the condition of a son of Adam, I have shewn you what conduct the apostles directed to be used towards them, and the vehement

terms in which they speak of them; and, I trust, you will acknowledge that I have not overstepped the bounds of Christian decorum, in my anxiety to defend the doctrine of Christ, and my desire to expose the monstrous error of those who have departed from it.

My heart's desire, and prayer to God for unbelievers is, that they will abandon the doctrine of Antichrist; that they will no longer deny, but, with the universal Church, believe in, and confess "the Father and the Son." And as for you, beloved, my intention has been to put you on your guard against the new revival of an antichristian error, and the artifices of deceivers in these our days. They call themselves *Unitarians*;—do they mean to insinuate that we worship *three* Gods?—"We know what we worship,"—the God

of the Scriptures,—in whose name we are baptized,—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—"three persons and one God." We look for a revelation of his nature in the Bible alone;—we worship not a creature of our own imagination—that were idolatry:—but whilst the Spirit prompts us to the act of adoration, we call for the blessing of the Father, through the mediation of the Son.

We are believers in the great sacrifice once offered by the only-begotten Son of God, for the sins of the whole world. That faith we recognize in the initiatory form of baptism enjoined by Christ himself. That faith we will "keep whole and undefiled" while we breathe;—and in that faith will we die.

I conclude with the words of St. John:—"We know that the Son of God is come,

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